

**CITY OF HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN**

**DATE:** April 14, 2026 **FILE:** 26-V-04

**TO:** Planning and Development Board

**VIA:** Cameron Palmer, Assistant Director / Chief Planner

**FROM:** Jesus Valdelamar, Assistant Planner

**SUBJECT:** Nova Southeastern University requests a Variance to increase the maximum allowable wall sign area from 150 square feet to 583 square feet (NSU Ocean Wall Sign)

**REQUEST**

Variations from Article 8, section 8.4(A)(7) of the Zoning and Land Development Regulations to permit a 583 square-foot wall sign, whereas 150 square feet is the maximum permitted; and to increase the maximum number of permitted wall signs from 3 to 6 within the Government Use (GU) Zoning District at the NSU Oceanographic Center Campus.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Variance 1: Approval  
Variance 2: Approval

**BACKGROUND**

Nova Southeastern University (NSU) is requesting two variances from Article 8, Section 7 of the Zoning and Land Development Regulations related to wall signage for the building located at 8000 N. Ocean Drive, which is the site of the Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center (NSUOC). The facility has operated in this location since 2012, following approval of a Design and Site Plan (10-DP-42) for an 87,000-square-foot graduate research facility located on a 9.15-acre property. The campus is dedicated to marine science research, education, and the study and conservation of coral reef ecosystems. The facility houses multiple research programs and laboratories, including those affiliated with the National Coral Reef Institute, and supports academic and scientific work focused on the marine environment of South Florida and beyond.

The property is located along the Intracoastal Waterway in the northernmost portion of the City of Hollywood, near Dr. Von D. Mizell–Eula Johnson State Park. Due to its location and function as a research campus, the surrounding area is characterized primarily by governmental, institutional, and environmental uses, rather than traditional commercial or residential development.

## REQUEST

The owner is requesting a 2 Variance from Article 8, section 8.4(A)(7) of the Zoning and Land Development Regulations to increase the maximum permitted wall sign area from 150 square feet to 583 square feet for a wall sign reading "NSU Ocean." The request also acknowledges that the building currently exceeds the maximum permitted number of wall signs per building, as the Code permits three (3) wall signs per building.

Pursuant to Article 8, wall signs are permitted at a rate of one (1) square foot per linear foot of building frontage, with a minimum of 25 square feet and a maximum of 150 square feet. The subject building has approximately 100.05 linear feet of frontage, which would permit a wall sign area of approximately 100 square feet, subject to the 150 square-foot maximum established by the Code. Article 8 also permits a maximum of three (3) wall signs per building.

The applicant is proposing a vertical wall sign on the west façade of the building which reads "NSU Ocean" over a coral reef graphic background. The proposed sign measures approximately 11 feet in width and 53 feet in height, resulting in a total sign area of approximately 583 square feet. As the proposed signage exceeds both the maximum permitted wall sign area and the maximum number of wall signs per building, a variance is required.

## SITE INFORMATION

<b>Owner/Applicant:</b>	Nova Southeastern University / Greenspoon Marder LLP/Elizabeth Somerstein, Esq
<b>Address/Location:</b>	8000 N Ocean Drive
<b>Size of Property:</b>	9.15 acres (398,609 sq. ft.)
<b>Zoning:</b>	Government Use (GU)
<b>Future Land Use Designation:</b>	Community Facility (COMFAC)
<b>Existing Use of Land:</b>	Institutional Facility

## ADJACENT LAND USE

<b>North:</b>	Community Facility
<b>South:</b>	Community Facility
<b>East:</b>	Open Space and Recreation
<b>West:</b>	Intracoastal Waterway

## ADJACENT ZONING

<b>North:</b>	Government Use (GU)
<b>South:</b>	Government Use (GU)
<b>East:</b>	Government Use (GU)
<b>West:</b>	Intracoastal Waterway

## CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Within the Comprehensive Plan, the primary goal of the Land Use Element is to *promote a distribution of land uses that will enhance and improve the residential, business, resort, and natural communities while allowing land owners to maximize the use of their property.*

**Policy 1.5:** The City of Hollywood will maintain its Zoning and Land Development Regulations to ensure that land use categories subdivision regulations, signage regulations, and flood ordinances are consistent with the Land Use Element and all other elements of the Hollywood Comprehensive Plan.

Staff finds that the proposed variance to increase the permitted wall sign area does not alter the underlying land use designation or permitted use of the property. The request is limited to signage associated with an existing institutional use within the Government Use (GU) zoning district. The proposed sign is intended to provide identification for the Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center, which is consistent with the established use of the site. As such, Staff finds that the request does not conflict with the goals, objectives, or policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

## APPLICABLE CRITERIA

**Analysis of Criteria and Findings for a Sign Variance** as stated in the City of Hollywood's Zoning and Land Development Regulations, Article 5.

**CRITERION 1:** The Variance is not contrary to the public interest

**ANALYSIS:** The subject property is developed with the Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center, an educational and research facility located within the Government Use (GU) zoning district. The proposed wall sign is intended to identify the "NSU Ocean" campus and support the institution's educational and research mission related to marine science and conservation.

The building is significantly set back from North Ocean Drive and screened by existing landscaping, limiting visibility from the public roadway. The proposed signage is located on the west façade, which faces the Intracoastal Waterway, and is intended to provide identification for visitors and marine operators traveling along the waterway. As the sign is associated with an existing institutional use and serves primarily as identification signage for the facility, staff finds that the requested variance for both the size of the wall sign and the number of wall signs on the building will not negatively impact the surrounding area or the public experience.

**FINDING:** Consistent.

**CRITERION 2:** The Variance is required due to special conditions

**ANALYSIS:** The subject property is developed with the Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center, an educational and research facility located within the Government Use (GU) zoning district. Unlike a typical commercial building that relies on signage visible from adjacent roadways, the facility is significantly set back from North Ocean Drive and screened by substantial landscaping, limiting visibility from the public right-of-way.

The proposed sign is located on the west façade of the building facing the Intracoastal Waterway, where visibility conditions differ from typical roadway-oriented development. Due to the unique location of the facility within a park setting and its orientation toward the waterway, larger signage is proposed to provide identification of the facility to visitors and marine operators traveling along the Intracoastal. Additionally, the building is a five-story research facility, and the vertical orientation of the proposed sign corresponds with the scale of the structure.

Given the institutional nature of the use, the building's orientation, and its limited visibility from the public roadway, staff finds that special conditions exist which support the requested variance for the wall sign area and the number of wall signs on the building.

**FINDING:** Consistent.

**CRITERION 3:** A literal enforcement of the provisions of Article 8 may result in unnecessary hardship.

**ANALYSIS:** A literal enforcement of Article 8 would limit the wall sign area to 150 square feet and restrict the building to a maximum of three wall signs. Due to the facility's location within John U. Lloyd State Park, its substantial setback from North Ocean Drive, and the presence of existing landscaping, visibility from the public roadway is limited. The proposed sign is intended to provide identification for the facility and is oriented toward the Intracoastal Waterway, where visitors and marine operators may approach the site from the water.

Given the scale of the five-story building, the unique location of the facility, and the institutional nature of the use, strict application of the sign regulations may limit the ability of the institution to provide effective identification of the campus. As such, staff finds that literal enforcement of the regulation may create an unnecessary hardship for the property owner-- \*given the unique location of the property within the city of Hollywood.

**FINDING:** Consistent.

**ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Application Package  
ATTACHMENT B: Land Use and Zoning Map