

Board of Adjustment

Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: BA15-039 (PLN2015-00317)
LOCATION/ADDRESS: 1455 S Stapley Drive
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 4
PLANNER: Lisa Davis, Planner II
OWNER: Stapley@60
APPLICANT: The Sign Company-Craig Musick

REQUEST: *Requesting: 1) a Special Use Permit for a Comprehensive Sign Plan; and 2) to allow an electronic message display to change more frequently than once every hour in the Limited Commercial (LC) Zoning District for Stapley @ 60 center located north of the US 60 on the east side of Stapley Drive.*

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S REQUEST

Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) and to allow an electronic message display to change more frequently than once every hour in the Limited Commercial (LC) zoning district for Stapley @ 60 Shopping Center. The site is located north of the U.S. 60 Superstition Freeway on the east side of Stapley Road. The proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan would allow 1.) Two detached signs adjacent to Stapley Road, one with electronic message; 2.) Two attached center ID wall signs; 3.) Criteria for attached signage for the tenants of the center. This CSP would replace the previously approved CSP from 1985, BA85-157.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of case BA15-039, conditioned upon the following:

1. Compliance with the sign plan submitted, except as modified by the conditions listed below.
2. Any additional signage not identified with this Sign Plan will require modification to this Special Use Permit.
3. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Division with regard to the issuance of sign permits.
4. **The proposed Stapley @ 60 Comprehensive Sign Plan is approved in tandem to the revisions to the shopping Center. The attached Center ID wall sign shall not be installed until the elevation modifications are complete.**
5. **The existing monument sign must be removed prior to the final of the sign permits for either or both of the proposed monument signs.**
6. ***At the electronic display message sign, each message shall remain static for a minimum of fifteen (15) seconds.***
7. ***The transitions between messages and the light intensity level of the electronic message display shall comply with the requirements of Section 11-41-8(D)17.***

SITE CONTEXT

CASE SITE: Existing shopping center– Zoned LC
NORTH: (across Hilton Avenue) Existing multi-residence subdivision - Zoned RM-2-PAD
EAST: Existing open space and multi-residence subdivision-Zoned RM-2-PAD
SOUTH: Existing open canal and off ramp for US 60 Superstition Freeway
WEST: Existing multi-residence apartment complex – Zoned RM-4

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

REQUEST 1: COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN

Site Area:	7.6 acres ±
Building Gross Floor Areas (GFA)	
Building A :	5,439 SF
Building B:	4,626 SF
Building C:	<u>81,844 SF</u>
Total	91,909 SF

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Staff did receive an email in regard to this case. The neighbor expressed concerns in regard to the overall of the upkeep of the existing project. He lives in the single residence homes just east of the project. He expressed concern with the ability to maintain any new signs since the building and the existing signs are not in good shape. He also stated that his health would not allow him to attend the public meeting.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to establish a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) including an electronic message display to change more frequently than once every hour for an existing shopping center being rebranded as Stapley @ 60. The 7.6± acre site is zoned LC, Limited Commercial, and was initially developed in 1984. The previously approved Comprehensive Sign Plan, BA85-157, will be completely eliminated and replaced with the current proposal. In April of 2015, an administrative review application, PLN2015-00086, revised both the center's elevations and landscape plans for the overall center. The commercial center includes 91,909 SF of commercial space with existing users such as Stratum Laser.

The proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) establishes sign specifications and requirements for Stapley @ 60 shopping center. The CSP proposes two detached signs adjacent to Stapley Road. One that is placed furthest south on the site is proposed to have the electronic message display. The existing 25'± high monument sign is proposed to be removed. In determining the amount of detached sign allowed on a site, it is determined by the street frontage of the project. Since this project is adjacent to an ADOT highway 'taper', the area adjacent to the ADOT street taper is not considered street frontage (The Sign Ordinance does not recognize limited access roads, such as freeways, as 'street frontages' for the purposes of determining sign entitlements). Therefore, of the 650'± width of the property only 370'± is considered street frontage. This would allow a maximum of 18'-6" of detached sign height for both of the proposed monument signs. Because of this taper and the fact that no detached signs are proposed adjacent to Hilton Avenue, Staff is in support of the proposed 24' total height, two at 12' high each.

As shown in Table 1, the total aggregate sign height and area proposed for detached signs along Stapley Road meet the allowed under current Sign Ordinance. No proposed detached sign exceeds the maximum allowed 12 feet in height or 80 square feet in area.

Detached Signs-Table 1

Street	Frontage	Number of signs proposed	Maximum aggregate height per frontage	Proposed aggregate height per frontage	Maximum height allowed/sign	Proposed Height/ Sign	Proposed Area/Sign
Stapley Road	370'	2	18.5'	24'	12 feet	12'	80 SF
Hilton Avenue	475'	0	23.7'	0'	12 feet	0	0

- A total of two detached signs are proposed adjacent to Stapley Road. No detached signs are proposed adjacent to Hilton Avenue. The detached sign design does include identification of multiple tenants within the Stapley @ 60 Retail Center. All proposed detached signs utilize a coordinated design theme that is consistent with the approved revised elevations.
- Because of the ADOT taper the frontage adjacent to Stapley Road, the remaining Stapley Road frontage of 370' would allow for a maximum of 18'-6" of aggregated sign height to be split between the two detached signs. The 475' frontage along Hilton Avenue would allow for 23.7' of height for detached signs. No signs are proposed adjacent to Hilton Avenue.

Attached Signs-Table 2

Building	Maximum Sign Area per Code	Maximum Number of Signs per Code	Proposed Maximum Sign Area	Proposed Maximum Number of Signs
Center ID wall signs	2.0 SF/linear foot of building frontage (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	> 100 feet building frontage – 3 signs	2 SF/linear foot of building frontage (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	Two signs One at the west and one at the south elevation
Tenants	2.0 SF/linear foot of building frontage (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	< 100 feet building frontage – 2 signs >100 feet building frontage – 3 signs	As required by Code	As required by Code

- Proposed attached signage will comply with the requirements of the CSP in regards to design, sign area, and numbers allowed. As shown in Table 2, there are two proposed Center ID wall signs to be placed at the west and south elevation of the southern-most building. Each of the proposed signs measures at just under eighty square feet (SF) in sign area.
- The applicant is not able to apply for a freeway landmark monument sign because a minimum of 30 acres is required. The size of the site is only 7.6 acres in size. There is limited visibility for the center from the adjacent US 60 Freeway. The placement of the Center ID wall signs would be visible from the off ramps and north and southbound traffic on Stapley Road. Staff is in support of the placement, size and number of Center ID wall signs.
- Revisions to the elevations and landscape plan were approved through an administrative application, PLN2015-00086. Colored elevations and the landscape plan are attached to this report.
- The proposed CSP is generally consistent with the Sign Ordinance. As justification for the increased detached sign height along Stapley Road the applicant has noted: 1) Removal of the existing 25'+ monument sign; 2) The two new monument signs will conform for current city of Mesa sign Ordinance requirements in maximum area and height; 3) Limited visibility of the site from the US 60 freeway and the existing canal at the south side of the site; 4) the establishment of new sign criteria is tailored to the revised updated development; and 5) the sign criteria is constant with and will not be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood.
- No deviations from the Sign ordinance are proposed with the CSP for the attached signs.

REQUEST 2: ELECTRONIC DISPLAY PANEL MESSAGE FREQUENCY

The current Sign Ordinance requires electronic message displays to remain static for a minimum of one hour unless a Special Use Permit (SUP) is granted. As part of the SUP for the CSP it may be granted if the proposed sign is found to be compatible with and not detrimental to surrounding properties through the consideration of specific factors of Section 11-19-8(D)17 which are:

1. The speed and volume of the vehicular traffic visually exposed to the sign;
2. The presence of other signs or distracting influences in proximity to the sign location; and
3. The extent to which the design of the sign is compatible with other signs located on the premises.

The maximum speed limit allowed on Stapley Road in this area is 45 mph. The existing monument sign is proposed to be removed and the second monument sign will be placed about 340' north of this sign. Therefore the number of sign distractions in this area is limited. The applicant is requesting a change in message display every 8 seconds. However, staff is recommending a 15 second message display as this is consistent with past Board of Adjustment decisions. The basis for these decisions has been the idea of having one or two messages visible for approximately a quarter mile as a vehicle approaches the sign. With a 45 mph speed limit, a vehicle traveling at that speed would travel 990-ft in 15-seconds. Over a quarter mile, there would be no-more than two messages over a 1320-ft (or one quarter-mile) distance. A static message for 15 seconds ensures the message is static long enough for the driver to read whatever it says quickly, in a single display, and then divert their attention back to the roadway.

FINDINGS

1. The original shopping center was developed in the mid1980's.
2. In 2015, the retail center received approval for revised updated elevations and landscape plan.
3. The CSP proposes two detached signs adjacent to Stapley Road with no detached signs proposed adjacent to Hilton Avenue. As shown in Table 1, the allowed overall total aggregate sign height proposed for detached signs along Stapley Road and Hilton Avenue are much less than are allowed under current Sign Ordinance maximums. No proposed detached sign exceeds 12 feet in height or 80 square feet in area.
4. The detached sign height allowance for this center along Stapley Road and Hilton Avenue is 42.2' and 24' is proposed.
5. The total sign area allowed adjacent to Stapley Road is 180 SF and 160 SF is proposed. Two signs at 80 SF each.
6. The existing 25'+ sign monument sign will be removed with the installation of the new monument signs.
7. The Center ID wall signs will help to identify the building at the US 60 off ramps. Placement of a freeway landmark sign is not allowed for the site because of the size of the parcel, 7.6 acres when 30 acres is required.
8. The existing canal located south of the site limits visibility of the retail center.
9. The proposed electronic message display sign is 340' south of the northernmost proposed monument sign for the center. The speed limit at Stapley Road is 45 mph which is typical for the area. The design of the sign is consistent with the approved updated elevations for the center.
10. The electronic message displays are to remain static for a minimum of one hour unless a Special Use Permit (SUP) is granted. With the Special Use Permit staff In this case a 15 second message display is

consistent with past Board of Adjustment decisions.

11. The proposed CSP is largely consistent with current Code requirements, and the deviations requested related to the height of detached signs adjacent to Stapley Road result in a plan that is complimentary to adjacent development and consistent with the use of the property. Therefore, the CSP, with the recommended conditions, will be compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or the neighborhood in general.

ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-19-5 – Definition of Terms:

SPECIAL USE PERMIT (S.U.P.): A discretionary authorization issued by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment only upon finding, through a public hearing, that the proposed activity permitted by such Special Use Permit is in conformance with the intent of this Code, the General Plan and/or other specified plans or Council policies; and will be compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or the neighborhood in general; and may be limited by specific conditions, restrictions, terms or time periods.

Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-19-8 (D) – Supplemental Provisions:

17. Electronic message displays are permitted in accordance with the following:
 - (b) Displays of static messages, where the message change sequence is accomplished immediately or by means of fade or dissolve modes, shall be permitted as a matter of right, subject to the sign size limitations otherwise applicable for the site, provided each message is displayed for a minimum period of one hour.
 - (c) A Special Use Permit under the Administration and Procedures Chapter of this Title shall be required for approval of the display of static messages displayed for a minimum period less than one hour, and changed by any mode, or for message changes accomplished by the means of travel or scrolling modes. The Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment may attach conditions to the approval of such Electronic Message Displays, including limitation on the minimum time period for the display of each message, to the extent necessary to ensure that the granting of the Special Use Permit will not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area or the public welfare, and will be consistent with the purpose and intent of this Chapter. In making this determination, the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment shall consider the following factors:
 1. The speed and volume of the vehicular traffic visually exposed to the sign;
 2. The presence of other signs or distracting influences in proximity to the sign location; and
 3. The extent to which the design of the sign is compatible with other signs located on the premises.

Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-41-6 – Signs Permitted By Zoning District:

(E) NC, LC, GC, PEP, LI, GI, HI and PS Districts

1. Attached Signs:
 - (a) Occupancies with less than one hundred (100) front feet: Two (2) signs for each occupancy not to exceed two (2) square feet of total sign area for each front foot of building occupancy.
 - (b) Occupancies with more than one hundred (100) front feet: Three (3) signs for each occupancy not to exceed two (2) square feet of total sign area for each front foot of building occupancy.

- (c) Total attached signage shall not exceed one hundred sixty (160) square feet per occupancy.
 - (d) Attached signage shall not extend horizontally a distance greater than fifty percent (50%) of the width of the building wall on which it is displayed, except for buildings containing multiple occupancies.
 - (e) Each occupancy shall be permitted at least twenty-four (24) square feet of attached signage.
 - (f) Occupancies having no exterior wall parallel to a fronting street shall be permitted signage based on two (2) square feet of sign area for each lineal foot of exterior wall of the front of such occupancy.
 - (g) Occupancies having an exterior building wall parallel to more than one fronting street shall be permitted signage based on the longer parallel wall. Signage placed on the shorter parallel exterior wall shall not exceed two (2) square feet of area per front foot of building occupancy of such shorter parallel wall, and this area shall be subtracted from the total allowable sign area.
 - (h) Attached signage shall be located on the specific occupancy identified therein and is not transferable from one occupancy to another.
2. Detached Signs:
- (a) One (1) square foot of total sign area per lineal foot of street frontage.
 - (b) One (1) foot of total sign height per each ten (10) feet of street frontage.
 - (c) Developments, including group C-O-I developments, displaying more than one (1) detached sign per street frontage shall be permitted fifty percent (50%) of total aggregate sign area and sign height specified in (a) and (b) above.
 - (d) No detached sign shall exceed eighty (80) square feet in area or twelve feet (12') in height.

Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-41-8 (D) – Supplemental Provisions:

13. A Comprehensive Sign Plan for a proposed or existing development/building may be approved by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment in conjunction with the granting of a Special Use Permit under Title 11, Administration and Procedures Chapter of the Mesa City Code. The purpose of a Comprehensive Sign Plan is to provide for the establishment of signage criteria that are tailored to a specific development or location, and which may vary from specific Ordinance provisions. The intent is to provide for flexible sign criteria that promote superior design through architectural integration of the site, buildings and signs.

A Comprehensive Sign Plan shall include the location, size, height, construction material, color, type of illumination and orientation of all proposed signs, either permanent or temporary.

A Comprehensive Sign Plan containing elements which exceed the permitted height, area and number of signs specified in this Chapter may be approved by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment only upon a finding that:

- (a) The development site contains unique or unusual physical conditions, such as topography, proportion, size or relation to a public street that would limit or restrict normal sign visibility; or
- (b) The proposed or existing development exhibits unique characteristics of land use, architectural style, site location, physical scale, historical interest or other distinguishing features that represent a clear variation from conventional development; or
- (c) The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as logos, emblems, murals or

statuaries that are integrated with the building architecture.

The construction and placement of individual signs contained in the approved Comprehensive Sign Plan shall be subject to the issuance of sign permits in accordance with 11-41-8 (E).