

Board of Adjustment

Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: BOA17-00210
LOCATION/ADDRESS: The 10700 to 10800 blocks of East Southern Avenue (south side) and the 1200 through 1300 blocks of South Signal Butte Road (west side)
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 6
STAFF PLANNER: Kim Steadman, RA – Senior Planner
OWNER: DD/Mountain Vista, LLC
APPLICANT: EARL, CURLEY & LAGARDE, P. C.

REQUEST: *Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for Mountain Vista Marketplace in the LC-PAD Zoning District.*

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S REQUEST

This request is for approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for Mountain Vista Marketplace, a 9.5-acre group commercial center located at the southwest corner of Signal Butte Road and Southern Avenue. The CSP proposes increases in the area and number of attached signs, and increases in the height and area of detached signs, in exchange for a reduction in the aggregate height and area of detached signage.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of case **BOA17-00140**, conditioned upon the following:

1. *Compliance with the sign plan submitted, except as modified by the conditions listed below.*
2. *Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Division in the issuance of sign permits.*
3. ***Compliance with the conditions of approved of Design Review, DRB17-00044.***
4. ***The three monument signs (sign "E") are limited to 12' to top of signage, and 80 SF of sign area.***

SITE CONTEXT

CASE SITE: Vacant – zoned LC-PAD
NORTH: (Across Southern Avenue) Existing commercial – Zoned LC-PAD
EAST: (Across Signal Butte Road) Vacant State Trust land – Zoned County RU-43
SOUTH: (Across Hampton Avenue) Vacant – Zoned LC-PAD
WEST: Vacant – Zoned LC-PAD

STAFF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) 11-41-6 establishes signage allowances, based upon zoning district. This request would modify the standards applied to this specific commercial center as follows:

Attached Signage: The CSP sets attached signage rules for three classes of retail space, identified in the sign plan as "Majors", "Shops" and "Pads". The proposed CSP differs from standard code for attached signage as follows:

- Major Tenants:
 - The CSP signage cap is more than double the area of current Code maximums (340 SF vs. 160 SF per Code).
 - Sign area per linear foot of building is reduced (1.5 SF vs. 2 SF per Code).

- Number of signs per Major Tenant is increased (4 vs. 3 per Code).
- Shops:
 - The CSP signage cap follows Code (160 SF).
 - Sign area per linear foot of building is reduced (1.5 SF vs. 2 SF) but it is calculated differently:
 - Code calculates signage based on the longest elevation of the building. This dimension sets the area and number of sign allowed.
 - The CSP sets the area of signs on the linear feet of the specific elevation containing the sign, allowing a sign on every elevation.
 - Number of signs is increased, but only for the end tenants which will have 3 exposed wall surfaces. All other shops have just a front and rear elevation, permitting them 2 signs.
- Pads:
 - The CSP signage cap is increased (200 SF vs. 160 SF per Code). The intent is to allow more attaches signage since the CSP intentionally does not allow detached signs for pads. Staff anticipates pads will want to modify the CSP to allow detached signs.
 - Sign area per lineal foot of building is reduced (1 SF vs. 2 SF per Code).
 - Number of signs is increased (4 vs. 2 to 3 per Code, depending on the length of the building). Again, the intent is to make the building visible without adding individual detached signs for pads.

Table 1 compares MZO standards with the proposed CSP. **Bolded** entries exceed Code.

Attached Signs – MZO Chapter 11-41-6.E.1

Table 1

Building	MZO Sign AREA Maximums	Proposed Sign AREA Maximum	MZO Maximum NUMBER of Signs	Proposed Maximum NUMBER of Signs
Major 1 (Sprouts) 164 front feet (east elevation)	2.0 SF /linear foot of building frontage (Max. 160 sf aggregate)	1.5 SF /linear foot of building frontage, per frontage w sign (250 SF east, 90 sf north = 340 SF aggregate)	> 100 feet building frontage – 3 signs	3 – east side, 1 – north side = 4 signs
Major 2 (Unidentified User) 138 front feet (south elevation)	2.0 SF /linear foot of building frontage (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	1.5 SF /linear foot of building frontage, per frontage w sign (250 SF -east, 90 SF south = 340 SF aggregate)	> 100 feet building frontage – 3 signs	3 – east side, 1 – south side = 4 signs
Inline Retail Tenant (Shops A and B) Various front feet	2.0 SF /linear foot of building frontage (Min. 24 SF, Max. 160 SF aggregate)	1 SF /linear foot of tenant frontage, per frontage w sign (Min. 24 SF, max. 160 SF agg.)	< 100 feet building frontage = 2 signs	One sign per exterior elevation = 2 to 3 signs per tenant
Freestanding Retail (Pads P1 – P3) Various front feet	2.0 SF /linear foot of building frontage (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	1 SF /linear foot of tenant frontage, per frontage w sign (200 SF max. aggregate)	< 100 feet building frontage – 2 signs > 100 feet building frontage – 3 signs	4 signs
Window Signs	Not limited	Major 1: 80% Shops & Pads: 20%	N/A	N/A

Detached Signage: The proposed CSP would allow one detached sign along Southern Avenue, two detached signs along Signal Butte Road, and no detached signs along the north side of Hampton Avenue. The three individual pad buildings would have no detached signs. By reducing the number of signs allowed, the CSP arrives at a reduction in *aggregate* height and area for detached signs along each street frontage, but **the proposed 17'-4" tall monument signs exceed the 12' maximum height allowed by code by 5'-4"**. **The proposed 94.72 SF sign area exceeds the 80 SF cap established by Code by 14.72 SF**. The CSP tries to balance these large signs by not allowing detached signs for the three pad buildings (but that is balanced by increasing attached signage for pads from 160 SF to 200 SF). Staff is concerned the businesses going into the pads will want to modify the CSP to allow detached signs. Table 2 compares MZO standards with the proposed CSP. **Bolded** entries exceed Code.

Detached Signs – MZO Chapter 11-41-6.E.2

Table 2

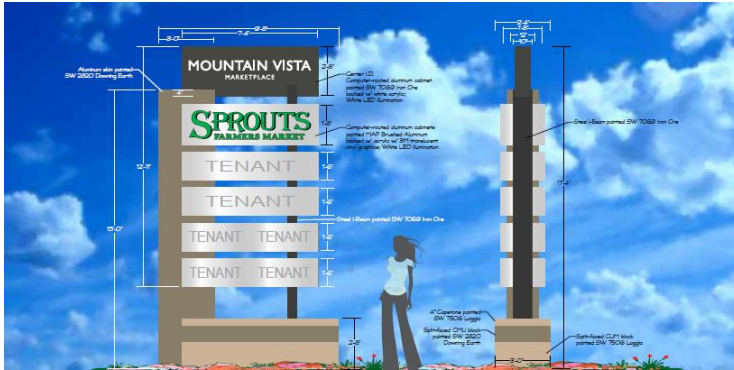
Street	Frontage	Code Aggregate Sign Area	Proposed Sign Area	Code Aggregate Sign Height	Proposed Sign Height
Southern Avenue Proposing 1 sign	±535'	267.5 SF aggregate 80 sf max, per sign	94.72 SF agg. 94.72 SF per sign	26.75' aggregate 12' max, per sign	17.33' agg. 17.33' per sign
Signal Butte Road Proposing 2 signs	±750'	375 SF aggregate 80 sf max, per sign	189.44 SF agg. 94.72 SF per sign	37.5' aggregate 12' max, per sign	27.33 agg. 17.33' per sign
Hampton Avenue Proposing no signs (north)	±525'	262.5 SF 80 sf max, per sign	0 SF	131.25' aggregate	0'
Detached signs for pad sites on each frontage.		Included in aggregate, above	Not allowed	Included in aggregate, above	Not allowed
Total	1,810'	905 SF	284.16 SF	195.5'	44.66'

MZO caps the height of detached signs at 12', and the area at 80'. Code allows another 2' in height for architectural embellishment of the sign. An example of this is the detached sign across Southern Avenue from the subject site. The overall height of the structure (street view image, right) is 14', with 12' to top of sign. The applicant proposes a 17' tall sign across the street from this sign.

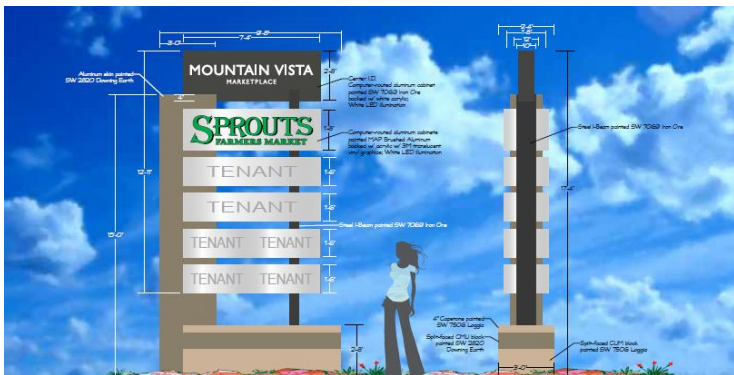
The proposed signs have a more vertical, fin-like form, with less embellishment than this sign, but there is nothing about the subject site that requires the signs to be 5'-4" taller than adjacent signs. Staff finds no justification for the applicant's proposal of detached signage that exceeds Code by 5'-4" in height, and 15 SF in area.



The applicant's first submittal proposed 13'-8"-tall detached signs, with a sign area of 58.4 SF. The applicant followed by proposing an even larger sign at 17'-4" tall, and 94.72 SF in area. The dimensions were changed, but the illustrations appear to be the same, making it impossible to determine the real effect of the revised sign.



This sign is labeled 13'-8" tall.



This sign is labeled 17'-4" tall.

Given the context and form of this development, staff does not find justification for excessive height or area in signage at street front. Rather, the CSP is justified in providing increased visibility for major tenants and for pad buildings with increased caps on attached signage.

Summary of Applicant's Justification

As justification for the increase in attached sign number and area, the applicant has noted:

- A. Mountain Vista Marketplace is a proposed 9.5-acre retail center;
- B. The CSP establishes a uniform aesthetic and quality standard for all signage within the project;
- C. The CSP reinforces the project image while identifying individual developments and businesses within the development;
- D. The CSP indicates the permitted and prohibited signs within the retail center; and
- E. The signage theme supports the architectural style of the retail center.

MZO 11-41-8.D establishes required findings in order for the Board of Adjustment to approve a CSP:

(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 Staff finds the distance of the Major Tenants from the street front justifies the increase in attached signage, but that the proposed detached signs exceed maximum height and area without justification.
(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 Staff finds the architectural style of the proposed development is a distinguishing feature, and that the development will be improved by a uniform approach to signage.
(c) The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as logos, emblems, murals or statuary that are integrated with the building architecture. Staff finds the signage theme supports the architectural style of the retail center.

Conclusion

It is common practice for a CSP to propose added attached signage that will increase visibility of major tenants. This is then balanced with a reduction in the detached signage at the street front. This proposal increases both attached and detached signage. Staff doesn't support the request to exceed standard Code caps for height and area of detached signs at the street front. A condition of approval limits detached sign height and area to Code maximums. With this limitation in place, the reduced aggregate height and area of detached signs will represent a reasonable reduction in detached signage, and will balance the increases in attached signage. Staff recommends approval, with conditions, based on the following findings:

FINDINGS

1. The CSP proposes attached sign area for Majors which is significantly greater than would be allowed by current Code. Increased sign area has been justified by the need for attached signs to be in proportion to the scale of the building and complementary to building architecture, and the distance of buildings from adjacent street frontages.
2. The CSP proposes attached sign area for Shops based on 1.5 SF of sign area per linear foot of building frontage. This is a reduction from Code. The CSP matches Code with the 160 SF sign area cap.
3. The CSP proposes attached sign area for Pads based on 1.5 SF of sign area per linear foot of building frontage. Sign number is increased to 4, from 2 to 3 (based on building size). The sign area cap is increased from 160 SF to 200 SF.
4. Detached signage along Southern Avenue and Signal Butte Road is proposed to have an aggregate of 52' in height and 284 SF in sign area, distributed between 3 detached signs.
5. Each detached sign, as proposed, exceeds the 12' cap for individual signs by 5'-4", and each sign area exceeds the 80 SF cap by 14.72 SF.
6. The sign criteria within the CSP is tailored to this specific development and promotes superior design.
7. The proposed CSP is complimentary to the 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 11-70-5 – Special Use Permit:

- A. *Special Use Permit (SUP)*. A SUP is a discretionary permit issued by the Zoning Administrator or Board of Adjustment.
- B. *Uses Subject to Special Use Permits*. Uses requiring a SUP are established in the use tables in Chapters 4 through 11.
- C. *Permit Requirements*. Permit requirements for some uses requiring a SUP are provided in Chapter 31, Standards for Specific Uses and Activities.
- D. *Permit Application and Procedures*. The procedures for review and consideration of a SUP are as provided in the Chapter 67, Common Procedures, except a citizen participation plan and report is not required.
- E. *Required Findings*. A SUP shall only be granted if the approving body determines that the project as submitted or modified conforms to all of the following criteria. If it is determined that it is not possible to make all of the required findings, the application shall be denied. The specific basis for denial shall be established in the record.
 1. Approval of the proposed project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable City plan and/or policies;
 2. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the district where it is located and conform with the General Plan and with any other applicable City plan or policies;
 3. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City; and

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.
- F. *Revocation of Special Use Permits.* A Special Use Permit granted pursuant to this Chapter may be suspended, revoked, or modified by the Zoning Administrator, after holding a public hearing to determine whether any condition, stipulation, or term of the approval of the Use Permit has been violated. At least 30-days notice shall be provided prior to the public hearing, and all of the noticing and hearing requirements of Chapter 67 shall apply.

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 Chapter 70 of this Ordinance. 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 statuary 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).