

## Board of Adjustment

### *Staff Report*

CASE NUMBER: BOA18-00490  
LOCATION/ADDRESS: 1158 W. University Dr.  
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 1  
STAFF PLANNER: Erik Hansen, Management Assistant II  
OWNER: Speedsmart 107, Inc.  
APPLICANT: Sarah Spradlin, Arizona Signs Plus

REQUEST: *Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) in the LC District.*

### SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S REQUEST

This request is for the approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for a Chevron gas station/convenience store, located at 1158 W. University Dr (property). The CSP proposes to maintain the current number of attached and detached signs for the development, which exceeds the current allowance for attached signs for the property.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of case BOA18-00490, **with the following conditions:**

1. *Compliance with the site plan, sign plan details, and project narrative submitted.*
2. *Compliance with the conditions of approval of ADM18-00493 for modification of the building color.*
3. *Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department in the issuance of sign permits.*

### SITE CONTEXT

CASE SITE: Gas station/convenience store – zoned LC  
NORTH: Multi-family residential units – zoned LC  
EAST: Shopping center – zoned NC  
SOUTH: Pizzeria (across street) – zoned LC  
WEST: Auto part supply store (across street)– zoned LC

### STAFF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

#### SUP - Comprehensive Sign Plan:

The property was first constructed in 1984 as a gas station/convenience store and has been operating as such since. The property currently includes three existing attached signs, including two on the gas station canopy and one on the convenience store. The property also includes two existing monument signs, each at 42.66 square feet. All signs were permitted and installed prior to the 2011 update of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO).

The proposed CSP would allow the two attached signs on the gas station canopy to be replaced with three new/rebranded signs and would do away with the sign on the convenience store. The proposed CSP would also account for the two detached monument signs. In total, the CSP proposes five signs for the development. Tables 1 and 2 (below) compare MZO standards with the proposed CSP. **Bolded** entries denote where the CSP proposal exceeds Code.

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

Sign Type	Maximum Number of Signs per Code	Proposed Total Number	Maximum Sign Area per Code (Aggregate)	Proposed Maximum Sign Area (Aggregate)	Individual Sign Height
<b>Attached Signage</b>	< 100' building frontage = 2 signs*	<b>3</b>	2 sq ft/linear foot of building frontage = 106 sq ft*	48.54 sq ft	N/A

\* Convenience store occupancy is 53'

The CSP proposes to maintain the current number of attached signs. Per the MZO, the site would typically be allowed 106 square feet of attached, aggregate sign area that may be distributed between a maximum of two signs. The CSP proposes 48.54 square feet of attached, aggregate sign area distributed among three signs. Staff believes this is a reasonable exchange as the signs are distributed amongst the site such that they do not create sign clutter.

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

Street	Total Number	Frontage	Maximum Sign Area per Code	Proposed Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height per Code	Proposed Sign Height
<b>W University Dr</b>	1	±127'	80 sq ft	42.66 sq ft	12 ft	10 ft
<b>N Alma School Rd</b>	1	±174'	80 sq ft	42.66 sq ft	12 ft	10 ft

The CSP proposes one detached sign placed on each street frontage with 41.37 square feet of sign area for each sign and a height of 10 feet. Per the MZO, the site could potentially have an 80 square foot detached sign at a height of 12 feet on each frontage street. As with the proposed, attached signage, the CSP proposes a reduction in the amount of sign area from Code maximums for detached signs.

MZO 11-41-8.D.13 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 believes the property's relation to two street frontages (N University Dr. and Alma School Rd.) justifies the three attached signs. The reduced sign area, distributed across three signs, works well on this small corner site, as do the detached signs that are smaller than allowed by Code.
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 signs are appropriate to the scale of this development and to the surrounding area. The gas canopy and small building have a simple aesthetic which is enhanced by the proposed sign design theme.
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 colors and materials used on the signs integrate with the building and use of the site. The small scale of the proposed logos accomplishes the signage needs in less area than allowed by Code.

#### **Summary of Applicant's Justification**

As justification for the proposed number of attached signs and overall sign area, the applicant has noted:

- A. The proposed sign package is a re-branding of existing structures with new colors, accent banding, logos, and lettering on canopy.
- B. The proposed sign package is an investment in the site to make it aesthetically pleasing.
- C. The proposed signage is integrated with the building architecture to enhance the site.

#### **Conclusion**

While the proposed CSP requests to maintain the current number of attached signs on the property, this exceeds Code based on the 2011 update of the MZO. However, the amount of total attached sign area is significantly less than that allowed by the MZO. In addition, the proposed CSP requests to maintain the current number and size of detached signs on the property, and again, the amount of total detached sign area is significantly less than that allowed by the MZO. The proposed CSP presents signs that are appropriately sized for the parcel and do not create sign clutter on the property. As such, Staff recommends approval, with conditions, based on the following findings:

#### **FINDINGS**

1. The CSP does not increase the amount of attached signage on site.
2. The CSP proposes to exceed Code for the number of attached signs on the property, but proposes an aggregate sign area below the allowed Code maximums.
3. The existing/proposed detached signage on site is below Code allowances for sign area and height.
4. The sign criteria within the CSP is tailored to this specific development and enhances the characteristics of the land use.
5. The CSP, with the recommended conditions, will be compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or the district in general.

## ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

### Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-70-5 – Special Use Permit:

- 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.

### 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).