

Board of Adjustment

Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: BOA18-00805
STAFF PLANNER: Charlotte Bridges, Planner I
LOCATION/ADDRESS: Within the 2700 block of South Signal Butte Road (east side) and the 10800 block of East Guadalupe Road (north side)
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 6
OWNER: Mesa Centerpointe Plaza, LLC
APPLICANT: Andrew Gibson, Bootz And Duke Sign C

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 approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for Mesa Centerpointe Plaza, a 7±-acre group commercial center located at the northeast corner of Signal Butte Road and Guadalupe Road. The CSP proposes an increase in the number of attached signs for some Pad Tenants and an increased aggregated sign area for Anchor Tenants in exchange for a reduction in the number of detached signs.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval**, of case BOA18-00805, **with the following conditions**:

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. Prior to issuance of a sign permit, a modified site plan shall be submitted for acceptance by the Planning director that addresses the following:
 - a. Relocate the detached signs out of any easement.
 - b. Relocate the detached sign along South Signal Butte Road out of any landscape island, or increase the width of the landscape island to allow the tree and shrubs to exist with the sign.

SITE CONTEXT

CASE SITE: Vacant – zoned LC
NORTH: Existing church - zoned AG, & vacant (approved for mini storage) – zoned LC
EAST: Vacant (approved for mini storage) – zoned LC
SOUTH: (across Guadalupe Road) Existing residential – zoned RS-6-PAD
WEST: (across Signal Butte Road) Existing commercial center – zoned LC-PAD

STAFF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) 11-43-3-D establishes signage allowances for developments in the LC district. This request would modify the standards applied to this specific commercial center as follows:

Attached Signage: The proposed CSP sets attached signage rules for three classes of commercial tenants, identified as “Anchor”, “Pad” and “Inline”. The CSP differs from standard code for attached signage as follows for the buildings shown on the approved site plan (ZON18-00597):

- Anchor Tenants (using the proposed CSP formula to calculate sign area):
 - The CSP aggregate sign area for Major A is more than the current Code maximum (240 SF vs.

- 160 SF per Code) for a building with 200' of lineal front feet of occupancy.
- The CSP aggregate sign area for Major B is more than the current Code maximum (240 SF vs. 160 SF per Code) for a building with 218' of lineal front feet of occupancy.
- Pad Tenants:
 - Number of signs for a building occupancy with 80-feet or less is increased (3 vs. 2 per Code).
- Inline Tenants:
 - The CSP sign area cap (160 SF) and number of allowed signs (2-3 depending on the front foot of building occupancy) matches Code .

Table 1 (below) compares MZO standards with the proposed CSP. **Bolded** entries differ from or exceed Code.
Attached Signs – MZO Chapter 11-43-3.D

Table 1

Building	MZO Sign AREA Maximums	Proposed Sign AREA Maximum	MZO Maximum NUMBER of Signs	Proposed Maximum NUMBER of Signs
Major A (Aldi) 200 front feet (south elevation)	80% of lineal front foot of occupancy (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	2.0 SF /linear foot of each building elevation (Max. 240 SF aggregate)	200-249 feet building frontage – 4 signs	4 signs (sign locations are not specified)
Major B (Unidentified User) 218 front feet (south elevation)	80% of lineal front foot of occupancy (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	2.0 SF /linear foot of each building elevation (Max. 240 SF aggregate)	200-249 feet building frontage – 4 signs	4 signs (sign locations are not specified)
Inline Retail Tenant (Major B option) Various front feet	2.0 SF /linear foot of building frontage (Min. 24 SF, Max. 160 SF aggregate)	2 SF /linear foot of tenant frontage each elevation (Min. 24 SF, Max. 160 SF aggregate)	≤ 80 feet tenant frontage = 2 signs 81-199 feet tenant frontage = 3 signs	Inline Tenant w/ 2 frontages = 2 signs Endcap Tenant w/ 3 frontages = 3 signs
Pads A & B Various front feet (for buildings with 80 or less front feet)	2.0 SF /linear foot of building frontage (Max. 160 SF aggregate)	2.0 SF /linear foot of each building elevation (160 SF max. aggregate)	≤ 80 feet building frontage = 2 signs 81-199 feet building frontage = 3 signs	3 signs (sign locations are not specified)

Another notable standard in the proposed CSP, is that all attached signage is to utilize either pan channel or reverse pan channel letters.

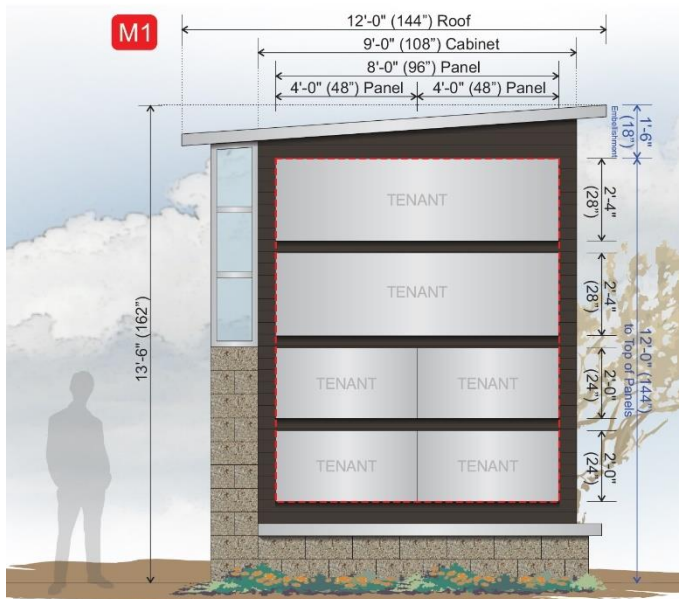
Detached Signage: The proposed CSP would limit detached signage to one multi-tenant sign along Signal Butte Road and one multi-tenant sign along Guadalupe Road for the shopping center. The CSP would also eliminate single-user detached signs. The CSP proposes less detached signage than allowed by Code. Table 2 (below) compares MZO standards with the proposed CSP.

Detached Signs – MZO Chapter 11-43-3.D.3:

Table 2

Street	Frontage	Code Aggregate Sign Area	Proposed Sign Area	Code Aggregate Sign Height	Proposed Sign Height
Signal Butte Road Proposing 1 sign	±548'	548 SF aggregate 80 sf max, per sign	80 SF aggregate 80 SF per sign	54.77' aggregate 12' max, per sign	12' aggregate. 12' per sign
Guadalupe Road Proposing 1 sign	±651'	650.5 SF aggregate 80 sf max, per sign	80 SF aggregate 80 SF per sign	65.05' aggregate 12' max, per sign	12' aggregate. 12' per sign

Following is an illustration of the proposed detached sign:



Note that the height of the detached sign in the illustration is labeled 13'-6". MZO 11-43-3.D.3 caps the height of detached signs at 12', and the area at 80 SF. MZO 11-43-2.C.2.d allows another 2.4' in height for architectural embellishment. The proposed detached sign design meets these Code height allowances.

However, staff is concerned with the locations of the detached signs as identified on the site plan submitted with the CSP. The detached sign along South Signal Butte Road is located in a required 8' X 15' landscape island, which also happens to be located in an easement. Detached signs are not allowed to encroach into any easements. Also, a standard 8' x 15' landscape island is not wide enough to accommodate the detached sign and ensure the

longevity of the tree and shrubs for which the landscape island is required. This will require further design. The detached sign along West Guadalupe Road is also encroaching into an easement. Staff has added a condition of approval to submit a revised site plan for Planning Director/Zoning Administrator acceptance, which addresses Staff's concern with locations of the detached signs.

Summary of Applicant's Justification:

The applicant provides the following justification for the CSP:

- The proposed CSP sets a standard for building sign design, and limits the amount of ground sign for the property;
- The ground signs have been designed to be an integral part of the center and to match the building designs and material to ensure an upscale shopping experience;
- The proposed use of pan channel and reverse pan channel letters for all attached signs meets MZO 11-43-2.B Attached Permanent Signs: Design Standards.
- The size constraints for the tenant building attached signage meet Code.
- The CSP provides a signage standard to ensure the center stays an upscale and an attractive destination for Mesa Shoppers.

MZO 11-46-3.D establishes required findings in order for the Board of Adjustment to approve a CSP:

Review Criteria	Findings
(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	The property's relation to two arterial street frontages, South Signal Butte Road and East Guadalupe Road, justifies the CSP request for increased attached signage in exchange for reduced detached signage.
(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 CSP provides for signage that integrates with that architecture. The development is improved by this uniform design approach to signage and buildings.
(c) The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as logos, emblems, murals or statuary that are integrated with the building architecture.	The signage design theme uses elements of the architectural style of the retail center.

Conclusion

It is common practice for a CSP to increase the number and aggregate area of attached signs. This is then balanced with a reduction in the detached signage at the street front. The minor increase in the number of attached signs for pad sites with ≤ 80 -feet of building frontage and the increase in the aggregate sign area for the anchor tenants proposed by this CSP, is balanced by a detached signage package that is significantly less than what is allowed by Code. Consequently, Staff recommends approval, with conditions, based on the following findings:

FINDINGS

1. The CSP proposes an aggregate attached sign area, which is greater than the Code maximum, but meets Code requirements for the number of attached signs for Anchor Tenants.
2. The CSP proposes an aggregate sign area and number of signs for Pad Tenants with building with frontages between 81-199-feet, which meets current Code.
3. The CSP proposes to increase in the number of attached signs for Pad Tenants with ≤ 80 -feet of building frontage from two signs to three signs but maintains an aggregate sign area that meets Code.
4. The requested increased aggregated sign area for Anchor Tenants and the increase in the number of attached signs for Pad Tenants with ≤ 80 -feet of building frontage is offset by a detached sign package that is significantly less than what is allowed by the Code.
5. The CSP proposes an aggregate attached sign area for Inline Tenants that meets current Code.
6. The CSP proposes a method for establishing the number of signs for Inline Tenants that is equivalent to current Code.
7. The sign criteria within the CSP is tailored to this specific development and promotes superior design.
8. The proposed CSP is complimentary to the development and consistent with the use of the property.
9. The CSP, with the recommended conditions of approval, will be compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or the neighborhood in general.

ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS:

MZO 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.

MZO 11-43-3: Permanent Sign Allowances by Zoning District

D. The following four (4) Tables provide the attached and detached permanent sign allowances in NC, LC, GC, PS, PEP, LI, GI, and HI.

1. The standard allowances for attached signs per occupancy are provided in Table 11-43-3-D-1.

Table 11-43-3-D-1: Standard Attached Sign Allowances Per Occupancy			
Front Foot of Building Occupancy (1)	Max. Number of Permitted Signs	Max. Aggregate Sign Area Calculation	Max. Area Per Sign
80-feet or Less (2)	2 signs	2 sq. ft. of sign area per front foot of building occupancy	160 sq. ft.
81 to 199-feet	3 signs	160 sq. ft. is allowed	160 sq. ft.
200 to 249-feet	4 signs	80% of lineal front foot of occupancy,	160 sq. ft.
250-feet or More	5 signs, plus one additional sign for every additional 50-feet of occupancy up to a max. of 7 signs	80% of lineal front foot of occupancy up to a max. of 500 sq. ft.	160 sq. ft.

(1) If an occupancy(s) has more than one exterior wall, the longest wall is used to calculate the sign allowance.

(2) Each occupant is allowed a minimum of twenty-four (24) sq. ft. of sign area regardless of front foot of building occupancy.

2. In lieu of the standard attached sign allowances in Table 11-43-3-D-1, a single occupant pad building under 5,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area may use the attached sign allowance in Table 11-43-3-D-2.

Table 11-43-3-D-2: Optional Attached Sign Allowances for Single Occupant Pad Buildings Under 5,000 sq. ft. of Gross Floor Area		
Max. Number of Permitted Signs	Max. Aggregate Sign Area Calculation ^{(1) (2)}	Max. Area Per Sign
4 signs	2 sq. ft. of sign area per lineal foot of the widest building elevation up to a max. of 160 sq. ft.	80 sq. ft.

⁽¹⁾ Sign shall not exceed more than 50% of the width of the building elevation.

⁽²⁾ A single-occupant pad building is allowed a minimum of 24 sq. ft. of sign area regardless of the widest building elevation.

3. The standard allowances for detached signs per development are provided in Table 11-43-3-D-3.

Table 11-43-3-D-3: Standard Detached Sign Allowances per Development			
Max. Number/Height	Max. Aggregate Sign Area Calculation	Max. Height	Max. Area Per Sign
One (1) Sign: 1-foot of sign height per 10 lineal feet of street frontage Multiple Signs: 1-foot of sign height per 20 lineal feet of street frontage	1 sq. ft. of sign area per lineal foot of street frontage	12-feet	80 sq. ft.

4. In lieu of the standard detached sign allowances in Table 11-43-D-3, commercial use developments with a minimum of three (3) separate occupants and more than four-hundred (400) feet of frontage along a single street frontage may use the detached sign allowance in Table 11-43-3-D-4 for one (1) sign within the development.

Table 11-43-3-D-4: Optional Detached Sign Allowance for Commercial Use Development with 3 Separate Occupants and more than 400-feet of Frontage		
Max. Number/Height	Max. Area Per Sign	Reference
The 120-sq. ft. max. sign can be up to 14-feet in height and all other detached signs shall not exceed 8-feet in height	One (1) sign at a max. of 120-sq. ft. and all other detached signs shall not exceed 50 sq. ft.	Use Table 11-43-3-D-3 to determine max. allowances for all detached signs in the development

MZO 11-46-3: Comprehensive Sign Plans:

- A. **Authorization.** The Zoning Administrator Hearing Officer or the Board of Adjustment may approve a comprehensive sign plan for a proposed or existing development or building in conjunction with the granting of a Special Use Permit in accordance with Chapters 67 and 70 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- B. **Purpose and Intent.** 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 Sign Ordinance provisions. The intent is to provide for flexible sign criteria that promote superior design through

architectural integration of the site, buildings, and signs. This does not allow for consideration of sign types allowed within a zoning district.

- C. **Minimum Required Elements of Comprehensive Sign Plan.** A comprehensive sign plan shall include the location, size, height, construction material, color, type of illumination, and orientation of all proposed permanent and portable signs, and any other document(s) necessary to determine if the plan meets the review criteria.
- D. **Review criteria.** The Zoning Administrator Hearing Officer or the Board of Adjustment may approve a comprehensive sign plan containing element which exceed the permitted height, area, and number of signs specified in this Sign Ordinance if the comprehensive sign plan conforms to the required findings in 11-70-5 of the Zoning Ordinance and upon a finding that:
 - 1. 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
 - 2. 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
 - 3. The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as lighting, materials and craftsmanship, murals, or statuary that reinforce or are integrated with the building architecture.
- E. **Sign Permit Required.** A sign permit is required for the construction and placement of individual signs contained in an approved comprehensive sign plan.
- F. **Modification and Expiration of Approved Sign Plans.** An approved comprehensive sign plan expires in accordance with Section 11-67-9 of the Zoning Ordinance. If a plan expires, the sign allowance for the property is based on the provisions in Chapters 42 and 43 of this Sign Ordinance unless a new comprehensive sign plan is approved.