



PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT

**Board of Adjustment**

**February 5, 2025**

CASE No.: <b>BOA24-01073</b>	CASE NAME: <b>Valley Express Towing Comp Sign Plan</b>
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Owner's Name:	THOMPSON, RICHARD A/JULIE A TR
Applicant's Name:	Andrew Chi, Andrew Chi Planning
Location of Request:	661 West Broadway Road
Parcel Nos:	134-10-063Q
Nature of Request:	Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP)
Zone District:	Light Industrial (LI)
Council District:	4
Site Size:	1.4± acres
Existing use:	Towing and Impound
Hearing date(s):	<b>August 7, 2024 / 5:30 p.m.</b>
Staff Planner:	Tye Hodson, Senior Planner
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

**HISTORY**

On **December 6, 1948**, the City Council annexed 2,420± acres into the City of Mesa, including the project site (Ordinance No. 228).

On **February 20, 1980**, the Board of Adjustment granted a variance to allow the sale and storage of landscape supplies on the project site (Case No. BA80-030).

On **February 22, 2005**, the Zoning Administrator approved a Special Use Permit (SUP) and Substantial Conformance Improvement Permit (SCIP) to allow a towing and impound yard on the project site (Case No. ZA05-015).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### **Background:**

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) to replace an existing monument sign with a larger monument sign in the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district. The requested CSP would allow exceptions to the maximum sign height (12 feet *allowed* to 14 feet *requested*) and the single base minimum width requirement (75% *required* to 30% *requested*) as specified in Article 5 of the Mesa Sign Ordinance.

### **General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:**

The General Plan character area designation on the property is Local Employment Center. Per Chapter 3 of the 2050 General Plan, Local Employment Centers are areas that support a variety of low intensity business operations that are compatible with residential uses.

Local Employment Centers generate low to moderate traffic volumes and may be located along collector or arterial streets and near residential uses. These areas should have a business park-like setting and incorporate elements that minimize negative impacts on surrounding commercial and residential uses.

### **Site Characteristics:**

The subject property is approximately 1.36± acres in size and zoned LI. The site has approximately 200 feet of street frontage along Broadway.

The existing 1,332± square-foot single-story industrial building was constructed in 1975, per the Maricopa County Assessor website, and is located south of West Broadway Road. The proposed CSP includes replacing the existing monument sign, per the applicant's plans, consistent with tenant signage found along West Broadway Road.

### **Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:**

<b>Northwest</b> (Across Broadway Road) GI Industrial	<b>North</b> (Across Broadway Road) GI Commercial	<b>Northeast</b> (Across Broadway Road) GI Commercial
<b>West</b> LI Commercial	<b>Subject Property</b> LI Industrial	<b>East</b> LI Industrial
<b>Southwest</b> (Across W Crescent Ave) LI Industrial	<b>South</b> (Across W Crescent Ave) LI Industrial	<b>Southeast</b> (Across W Crescent Ave) LI Industrial

### **Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:**

### **Comprehensive Sign Plan MZO Section 11-46-3(D):**

Per Section 11-46-3(D) of the MZO, the Board of Adjustment shall find the following criteria are met for approval of a CSP:

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

**Per the applicant's narrative, the subject site is located on a four-lane major arterial street with an average speed limit of 40 MPH, where business identification and way finding is critical for drivers to make safe turning movements into the business. Additionally, the average height of a tow truck is approximately seven feet. The proposed seven-foot clearance from grade to the bottom of the cabinet sign, combined with a 36-inch-wide single base, ensures sufficient maneuvering space for tow trucks entering and exiting the site. These unique physical conditions justify the need for a 14-foot-tall sign, as opposed to the 12-foot maximum, to address visibility and functional requirements effectively.**

***The proposal meets this criterion.***

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

**Per the applicant's narrative, Valley Express Towing operates within a Light Industrial (LI) zoning district, and the nature of its business requires signage that is easily readable from a distance to direct tow truck and vehicular traffic safely into the site.**

**Additionally, an exception is requested from the single base minimum width requirement, as outlined in Zoning Ordinance Section 11-43-2.C.1.a. The proposed sign copy is 120 inches (10 feet) wide, while the single base width is proposed at 36 inches (3 feet). Under the ordinance, the base would need to be 75% of the width of the sign copy, or 90 inches (7.5 feet) wide, which would constrain driveway ingress for tow trucks and other vehicles.**

***The proposal meets this criterion.***

3. The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as lighting, materials, and craftsmanship, murals, or statuaries that reinforce or are integrated with the building architecture.

**The proposed signage is consistent with the overall design and color scheme of the primary structure and will complement the site, improving the site aesthetic and providing needed improvements to the area.**

***The proposal meets this criterion.***

**Special Use Permit MZO Section 11-70-5**

Per Section 11-70-5(E) of the MZO, the Board of Adjustment shall also find the following criteria are met for approval of a SUP:

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;

**Per the applicant’s narrative, approval of this CSP advances the goals and objectives of the City of Mesa’s General Plan by enhancing the visibility and accessibility of a business operating in the LI District. This district is intended to promote the development of light industrial uses that are compatible with adjacent commercial and residential uses. The proposed sign will improve traffic safety and access to Valley Express Towing, contributing to the business’s success and the economic vitality of the area, in line with the City’s plans to support business growth in designated industrial districts.**

*The proposal meets this criterion.*

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 any other applicable City plan or policies;

**Per the applicant’s narrative, the LI District is intended to provide locations for manufacturing, warehousing, service, and distribution businesses, with an emphasis on operations that do not generate significant off-site impacts. The location, size, and design of the proposed freestanding sign are consistent with the purposes of this district.**

*The proposal meets this criterion.*

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

**Per the applicant’s narrative, the 14-foot height is appropriate within the existing context of Broadway Road, where other freestanding signs exceed the 12- foot height limit. Not only will the proposed 14-foot-tall Valley Express Towing freestanding sign be consistent with the character of the surrounding area, but it will also be shorter than the two (2) freestanding signs located at adjacent auto oriented businesses. The proposed sign will therefore be harmonious with the surrounding area, enhancing visibility without creating negative visual impacts. Additionally, the sign’s placement and design will enhance driver safety, reducing the likelihood of sudden lane changes or abrupt turning movements into the business. These improvements support the**

**welfare of both the business and the general community, ensuring that the sign contributes positively to the neighborhood.**

***The proposal meets this criterion.***

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.

**Per the applicant's narrative, the proposed sign will utilize existing public infrastructure and services, including electrical connections, without placing additional demands on public resources. All necessary public services, facilities, and infrastructure are available to support the installation and operation of the sign, ensuring it can function safely and efficiently without impacting public utilities.**

***The proposal meets this criterion.***

Findings:

- A. The proposed CSP requests modifications to the Mesa Zoning Ordinance to provide a sense of place and to address safety concerns.
- B. The CSP specifies the location and area of the proposed signage for the development.
- C. The project site is located in the LI zone district, within the Local Employment Center Place Type of the 2050 General Plan and within the Evolve Growth Strategy area.
- D. The proposed CSP advances the goals and objectives of the General Plan and character area by contributing to an active and engaging business district.
- E. The proposed CSP will not be injurious or detrimental to the surrounding properties.

**Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:**

The applicant mailed the required notification letters to all property owners within 500 feet of the project site. As of the date of this report, staff has not been contacted by any resident or property owner to express support or opposition to the request.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Based on the application received and preceding analysis, staff finds the proposed CSP conforms to the review criteria for Comprehensive Sign Plans outlined in Section 11-46-3 of the MZO and the required findings for a Special Use Permit outlined in Section 11-70-5 of the MZO; therefore, staff recommends approval with the following conditions.

**Conditions of Approval:**

1. Compliance with the sign plan documents submitted.
2. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department regarding the issuance of building permits.
3. All signage to be reviewed and approved through a separate permit application.
4. All illuminated signs are subject to Section 11-41-3 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

**Exhibits:**

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map

Exhibit 2 – Staff Report

Exhibit 3 – Project Narrative

Exhibit 4 – Comprehensive Sign Plan