



Justification for The Nox Comprehensive Sign Plan and Special Use Permit

This Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) and Special Use Permit (SUP) for The Nox and Hotel Umbrella Studios is necessary to provide an effective, integrated, and high-quality sign program featuring unique designs, exceptional quality and materials that reflect the singular nature of the project and its particular location. Given its visionary concept as a premier entertainment venue that will attract entertainment, artists, and visitors to a "music and cultural hub," the signage needs to go beyond what is typically allowed for Light Industrial (LI) zoned properties.

The proposed signage meets Special Use Permit criteria in MZO Section 11-70-5(E) by establishing a visual identity that is compatible with the "premier entertainment" land use while prioritizing public safety and regional economic goals.

- **Community Alignment:** The plan supports the Mesa 2050 General Plan and the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan by fostering an exciting entertainment venue that generates both tourism and creative-sector employment opportunities.
- **Safety and Circulation:** All signs are positioned outside of sight visibility triangles at driveways to ensure traffic safety.
- **Infrastructure Protection:** An 811-survey confirmed that no signs conflict with utilities or Public Utility Easements (PUE), and all new electrical services will be placed underground.
- **Operational Necessity:** The use of large-scale Electronic Message Displays (EMDs) is justified by the unique requirements of a high-capacity venue (996 people) to advertise transient performances and events.

The Comprehensive Sign Plan fulfills Section 11-46-3(D) requirements by providing a cohesive, high-quality design program that integrates signage into the building's architecture and mitigates the site's unique physical constraints.

- **Architectural Integration:** Signage is designed to complement the building's Romanesque-inspired style, utilizing concealed mounting hardware and flush-mounted EMDs within domed tower elements.
- **Design Excellence:** The plan incorporates three-dimensional sculptural elements, such as the microphone and moon orb on Sign A1, which reinforce the entertainment theme.
- **Justification for Deviations:** The site's unique physical conditions, specifically its massive scale and immediate proximity to the Loop 202 San Tan Freeway, necessitate deviations in aggregate area and spacing to ensure effective wayfinding and commerce attraction.
- **Technical Mitigations:** To minimize impact on the surrounding area, the plan includes automatic ambient light sensors for EMDs to adjust brightness and adheres to strict city codes for dwell times and nighttime illumination differentials.

Justification for Ground Sign Deviations

The project requires multiple ground signs at the entrance for effective wayfinding and identification, necessitating two deviations related to spacing and size:

- **Sign Spacing Deviation (Signs A & B):** The City Ordinance requires at least 75 feet of separation between detached permanent signs on the same parcel. However, the proposed main entrance signs, Sign A (Primary ID) and Sign B (Wayfinding/Directional), are planned to be only 36 feet apart. This deviation is unavoidable because no feasible alternative location exists to place these two signs 75 feet apart while maintaining their functionality. Sign A functions as the main 3D sculptural branding element, while Sign B is essential for guiding visitors to the Entrance/Valet/Parking/Receiving areas.
- **Sign Area Deviation (Signs A1-A2):** Sign A1-A2 is a unique detached freestanding sign with a three-dimensional microphone and moon orb that comprise the impressive branding identity of The Nox. Signs A1 and A2 combined exceed the standard maximum allowable area. This unusually unique monument design requires large proportions to be consistent with the physical scale of the building. The scale exemplifies the vibe and character of the venue, fulfilling its role as a premier entertainment hub within the community.

Justification for Building Sign Deviations

The building signage requires significant deviations in aggregate area and to accommodate Electronic Message Display (EMD) size to ensure visibility from the adjacent freeway and surrounding areas:

- **Aggregate Sign Area Deviation (C1, C2, D1, D2, E1, E2):** Signs C1, D1, D2, E1, and E2 on the south elevation total 695.1 square feet. Signs C2 and E3 on the north elevation total 138.96 square feet. The combined sign area on both the south elevation and the north elevation totals 834.06 sq.ft. exceeding the allowable maximum sign area (1 sq. ft. per linear foot of elevation, 500 sq. ft. maximum aggregate). The overriding justification is the project location immediately south of the 202 San Tan Freeway. This proximity necessitates more visible signage to attract commerce, residents, and visitors, which aligns with the goal of promoting Mesa as a music and entertainment destination. Additionally, the North Elevation's deviation is necessary because the building is designed for two tenants ("The Nox" and "Hotel Umbrella Studios"), requiring architectural variation to identify both entities.
- **Electronic Message Display (EMD) Size Deviation (E1, E2, E3):** The three EMDs (E1/E2 on the south, E3 on the north) collectively total 624 square feet, significantly exceeding the typical 40 square foot maximum, and are not compliant with standard size tables in the code. The justification for these large-scale EMDs is directly tied to the project's unique land use. Large EMDs are essential for advertising events and attracting visitors and are a widespread practice for large-scale venues to increase visibility from the freeway. All proposed EMDs are fully customizable with illuminance adjusted to meet zoning requirements for display brightness, and manual luminosity readings can be made available upon installation.

In summary, the proposed CSP and SUP are integral to the building's design and concept, accommodating the conspicuous scale, unique Romanesque-inspired architecture, and freeway-adjacent location of The Nox project. Granting these deviations will allow for a high-quality, memorable, and functional sign program that supports the City's goals for economic activity and creative-sector employment in the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan area.