



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Board of Adjustment

December 4, 2024

CASE No.: BOA24-00550	CASE NAME: Avalon Ranch CSP
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Owner's Name:	Avalon Development LLC
Applicant's Name:	Ana Jones, Trademark Visual, Inc
Location of Request:	Southeast corner of East Elliot Road and South Power Road
Parcel Nos:	304-19-989, 304-19-990, 304-19-991, 304-19-992, 304-19-993, 304-19-994, 304-19-995
Nature of Request:	Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) in the Limited Commercial (LC) District.
Zone District:	Limited Commercial (LC)
Council District:	6
Site size:	12 ± acres
Existing use:	Vacant (approved commercial center)
Hearing date:	December 4, 2024 / 5:00 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Sergio Solis, Planner I
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **October 23, 1998**, the City Council annexed approximately 154± acres of property, including the project site, into the City of Mesa (Case No. A98-004, Ordinance No. 3535); and subsequently zoned the property to Single Residence (RS-43) (Case No. Z98-103, Ordinance No. 3577).

On **April 5, 1999**, the City Council approved a rezone of 82± acres of land, including the project site, from RS-43 to Limited Commercial (LC), Multiple Residence 3 (RM-3), and Light Industrial (LI) to allow a mixed-use development (Case No. Z99-016, Ordinance No. 3610).

On **August 25, 2008**, the City Council approved a rezone of the project site from LC to LC with a Planned Area Development and Bonus Intensity Zone Overlay (LC-PAD-BIZ) to allow a commercial center (Case No. Z08-044, Ordinance No. 4873).

On **May 15, 2023**, the City Council approved a Site Plan and a rezone from LC-PAD-BIZ to LC, for the development of a large commercial development which includes a service station, four (4) restaurants with drive-thrus, large-scale commercial recreation, and retail (Case No. ZON22-01271, Ordinance No. 5781).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) for a 12 ± acre commercial center in the Limited Commercial (LC) zoning district. The requested CSP would allow attached and detached signage in compliance with Article 5 Sign Ordinance of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO). The CSP request does not include deviations from City standards.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The subject site is located within the Mixed Use Activity District and Employment character area designations of the Mesa 2040 General Plan. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the goal for these districts is to provide for a wide range of employment opportunities and to create viable centers of commercial activity that attract people to unique shopping and employment experiences. The requested CSP is consistent with the designated General Plan character areas.

Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan:

The site is located within the Inner Loop District of the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan. Per the Plan, the focus of the Inner Loop District is to provide a high-quality, mixed-use environment that is compatible with increasing over-flight activities associated with Mesa Gateway Airport operations. The proposed CSP is consistent with the goals and intent of the Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan.

Site Characteristics:

The subject site is located on the southeast corner of East Elliot Road and South Power Road. The site is approximately 12 acres and has 727-feet of street frontage along East Elliot Road, and 706-feet of street frontage along South Power Road. The approved site plan for the commercial center includes a service station, four pad restaurants with drive-thrus, large-scale commercial recreation and retail. The subject site is zoned Limited Commercial (LC) with no overlay zones.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest (Across Elliot Road & Power Road) Town of Gilbert Vacant	North (Across Elliot Road) LC Vacant	Northeast (Across Elliot Road) LI-PAD Industrial Development
West (Across Power Road) Town of Gilbert Vacant	Subject Property LC Vacant	East LC Offices
Southwest (Across Power Road)	South	Southeast

Town of Gilbert Vacant	LC & LI-PAD Commercial & School	LI-PAD School
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Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:

Per MZO Section 11-43-3-D, there are four (4) tables that provide standards for attached and detached sign allowances in the LC zoning district. The requested CSP makes no changes to the standards for attached or detached permanent signs; however, it will establish architectural directives, and will utilize quality materials like nichia fiber cement cladding and aluminum brush finishes to achieve an elevated design standard.

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

Per Section 11-46-3(D) of the MZO, the Board of Adjustment may approve a CSP if it finds the following criteria is 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**
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.

Per the project narrative, consistent with the design guidelines for Avalon Ranch, the overall signage design combines a warm modern aesthetic and uses modern materials to produce a consistent collage of signs for visitors to the project while fitting in seamlessly with the built environment. The proposed signage is elevated in both materials and creative design and includes a number of special features to achieve an elevated aesthetic including the usage of brush aluminum frames and finishes, Nichia fiber cement exterior cladding, and modern construction that will complement the approved elevations and materials for the commercial center.

The request 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;

The project site is located in the Mixed Use Activity and Employment character area designations of the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The proposed sign plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan and approval will advance the goals and objectives by allowing a customized sign plan to enhance site visibility.

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;

Avalon Ranch meets the goals and implements the purpose and intent of the Mixed-Use Activity character area. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of Avalon Ranch and the proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan are consistent with the purposes of the district and conform with the General Plan.

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

The proposed sign plan will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area and will not be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City. The proposed sign plan is compliant with current City Code and all Sign standards.

The proposal meets this criterion.

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

There are adequate public services, facilities, and infrastructure to serve the approved project. This request for a SUP to allow a CSP will not require any additional services, facilities, or infrastructure.

The request meets this criterion

Findings:

- A. The proposed CSP complies with Section 11-43-3(D) of the MZO for attached and detached signs in the LC District.
- B. The proposed detached & attached signage is consistent with the approved architecture for the development.

- C. The CSP advances the goals and objectives of the Mixed Use Activity District and Employment character area designations by establishing a customized sign plan to help create and maintain a strong and viable commercial center and identify the development to vehicle, transit, and pedestrian users.
- D. The proposed CSP is consistent with the location, size, design and operating characteristics of the LC District and the surrounding area.
- E. The proposed CSP will not be injurious or detrimental to the surrounding properties.
- F. The City of Mesa utilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the approved development.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

The applicant completed a Citizen Participation Process, which included mailing notification letters to all property owners within 500 feet of the project site. As of the writing 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 upon the application received and preceding analysis, Staff finds that the requested Special Use Permit for a Comprehensive Sign Plan complies with the review criteria for a Comprehensive Sign Plan 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; and therefore, recommends approval of the request with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

- 1. Compliance with the Comprehensive Sign Plan and submitted documents.
- 2. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department regarding the issuance of building permits.
- 3. All signs shall remain outside of the public domain including rights-of-way, Public Utility Easements and Public Utility Facility Easements.
- 4. All signage to be reviewed and approved through a separate permit application.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map
Exhibit 2 – Staff Report
Exhibit 3 – Project Narrative and Justification Statement
Exhibit 4 – Comprehensive Sign Plan