



**PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT**

Planning and Zoning Board

March 12, 2025

CASE No.: ZON24-00876	PROJECT NAME: Medina Station Freeway Landmark Monument
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Owner’s Name:	Bela Flor Holdings, LLC
Applicant’s Name:	James Rogers, Davis Signs & Graphics
Location of Request:	Located at the southeast corner of East Southern Avenue and South Signal Butte Road
Parcel No(s):	220-82-018A, 220-82-018B, 220-82-018C, 220-82-018D
Request:	Council Use Permit for a Freeway Landmark Monument
Existing Zoning District:	Limited Commercial with a Planned Area Development Overlay (LC-PAD)
Council District:	5
Site Size:	61± acres
Proposed Use(s):	Freeway Landmark Monument
Existing Use(s):	Vacant
P&Z Hearing Date(s):	March 12, 2025 / 4:00 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Cassidy Welch, Principal Planner
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **January 27, 2025**, the City Council approved the annexation of 64± acres, including the project site, into the City of Mesa and established a comparable zoning of Agricultural (AG) (Case No. ANX23-00690; Ordinance No. 5924).

On **January 27, 2025**, the City Council approved a rezone of the project site from AG to Limited Commercial with a Planned Area Development, Council Use Permit, and Initial Site Plan to allow for a mixed-use development (Case No. ZON23-00691; Ordinance No. 5925)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting a Council Use Permit (CUP) to allow for a Freeway Landmark Monument (FLM) within the southern portion of Medina Station (Proposed Project). The project site is located at the southeast corner of Southern Avenue and Signal Butte Road and is approximately 61 acres in size. The Proposed Project consists of one, two-faced FLM sign with a maximum height of 47 feet and a total sign area of 315 square feet.

On November 18, 2024, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 5866, which repealed Mesa City Code 11-43-7 and the City's FLM Design Guidelines and replaced both with a new section 11-43-7, effective December 18, 2024. The applicant submitted its FLM application prior to the effective date of Ordinance No. 5866 and is therefore being analyzed under the version of Mesa City Code 11-43-7 and the City's FLM Design Guidelines that existed at the time of the application.

Per Section 11-43-7 of the MZO, a FLM is permitted within the LC zoning district, subject to approval of a CUP. Prior to consideration of the CUP by City Council, the Design Review Board and Planning and Zoning Board shall review and provide a recommendation.

The Planning and Zoning Board may only consider applications based on the adopted FLM guidelines and the criteria for a CUP outlined in Section 11-70-6 of the MZO. The FLM's design, materials, method of illumination, any electronic displays and other architectural features are subject to consideration by the Design Review Board.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The Mesa 2040 General Plan Character Area designation on the property is Mixed Use Activity District with a Regional-Scale Sub-type. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, Mixed Use Activity Character Areas are large in scale (over 25 acres) and provide community and regional activity areas. Per the Plan, these areas generally have a substantial commercial component including shopping areas such as malls, power centers, or lifestyle centers that are designated and developed to attract customers from a large radius. The goal of this district is to also help create strong and viable centers of commercial activity that attract people to unique shopping and entertainment experiences. These areas may take on a significant residential character with development, so long as the residential component is developed secondary to the primary uses.

Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, a minimum of 70% of the character area must be established

with primary zoning and primary land uses before secondary zoning districts and land uses are allowed. The existing LC zoning is a primary zoning district in the Mixed Use Activity District Character Area and the proposed used approved for the mixed-use project meet the 70% threshold.

The proposed Freeway Landmark Monument will support the mixed-use development approved by City Council in January 2025 (Medina Station), which includes a regional power center. As a result, the Proposed Project aligns with and complies with the Mesa 2040 General Plan.

Zoning District Designations:

The project site is currently zoned LC-PAD. Per Section 11-43-7(C) and (D) of the MZO, a FLM is allowed in the LC District subject to approval of a Council Use Permit.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

<p>Northwest (Across Southern Avenue and Signal Butte Road) LC-PAD Commercial</p>	<p>North (Across Southern Avenue) LC & RS-6-PAD Commercial, Vacant & Single Residence</p>	<p>Northeast (Across Southern Avenue) RS-6-PAD Single Residence</p>
<p>West (Across Signal Butte Road) LC & LC-PAD-PAD Commercial</p>	<p>Project Site LC-PAD Vacant</p>	<p>East Maricopa County RU-43 Vacant</p>
<p>Southwest (Across Signal Butte Road and US-60 Freeway) LC-PAD Commercial</p>	<p>South (Across US-60 Freeway) Maricopa County RU-43 Vacant</p>	<p>Southeast (Across US-60 Freeway) Maricopa County RU-43 Vacant</p>

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:

The project site is currently undeveloped. An existing commercial development is located west of the project site across Signal Butte Road. A commercial development and vacant commercial parcel are located to the north of the project site, across Southern Avenue. Additionally, a single residence subdivision exists to the north, across Southern Avenue. The project site is bordered by Arizona Department of Transportation retention basin to the east and the US-60 Freeway to the south.

Council Use Permit:

Per Section 11-43-7(C) and (D) of the MZO, a FLM is permitted in the LC zoning district, subject to the approval of a CUP in accordance with the required findings outlined Section 11-70-6 of the Zoning Ordinance. The required findings are as follows:

- A. 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 Proposed Project advances the goals of this designation by enhancing visibility of the Medina Station development and attracting regional visitors to the power center.

- B. 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;

The height, size, and design characteristics of the Proposed Project are generally consistent with the adopted FLM guidelines and conform with the goals of the General Plan and Medina Station Design Guidelines.

As part of the application process, the applicant conducted a location analysis and worked with Staff to determine the optimal height required to make the sign legible while also assuring traffic safety. Plywood was attached to a crane to indicate the sign's prospective height and a vantage of the crane was taken from different angles along the US 60 Freeway.

- C. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area of the proposed project or improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City; and

The Proposed Project is located approximately 240 feet north of the centerline of the freeway off ramp, providing adequate separation from nearby drivers. The proposed sign area is also appropriate to the scale and type of regional development represented by Medina Station. The Proposed Project is located approximately 1,700 feet from the closest existing residential which exceeds the minimum 470-foot separation required.

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

Permits are currently under review for the installation of public infrastructure along Southern Avenue and Signal Butte Road to serve the approved Medina Station development. At the time of construction, adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure will be available to serve the Proposed Project.

Site Plan and General Site Development Standards:

The Proposed Project consists of one, two-faced FLM with a maximum height of 47 feet and a total sign area of 303 square feet. The proposed FLM would be located approximately 490 feet east of Signal Butte Road and six feet north of the US 60 Freeway.

The proposed FLM would consist of a gray board form concrete base, two beige stucco supports, light beige routed aluminum tenant panels with a stucco finish, and a gray routed identification cap with a stucco finish. The FLM would be internally illuminated but does not include an electronic message display.

In 2006, the Mesa City Council adopted Freeway Landmark Monument Design Guidelines to facilitate construction of well-designed, appropriately sited, and aesthetically pleasing freeway signage within Mesa (Resolution No. 8700). On November 18, 2024, the City Council approved to repeal the design guidelines and codify the standards within Section 11-43-7 of the MZO.

The Proposed Project was submitted prior to the adoption of the text amendments and was reviewed under the 2006 guidelines.

In summary, the Proposed Project meets the general provisions, location and siting and design, and construction standards as outlined in the Freeway Landmark Monument Guidelines.

Design Review:

The Design Review Board will review the Proposed Project at their March 11, 2025 meeting and make a recommendation to City Council. Staff will update the Board of the meeting outcome at the study session.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

The applicant completed a Citizen Participation process, which included mailing letters to property owners within 1,000 feet of the site, and registered neighborhoods, and Homeowners Associations within one mile of the site.

A neighborhood meeting was held on December 5, 2024. There were two attendees who had general comments about the overall mixed-use development and construction timelines. A summary of this meeting is included in the Citizen Participation Report.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff finds that the Proposed Project complies with the 2040 General Plan, complies with the criteria for a CUP outlined in Section 11-70-6 of the MZO, and meets the requirements of the Freeway Landmark Monument Guidelines.

Staff recommends Approval of the request with the following **Conditions of Approval:**

1. Compliance with the final sign plan submitted.
2. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review Case No. DRB24-01010.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.

Exhibits:

- Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 2 – Project Narrative
- Exhibit 3 – Sign Plan
- Exhibit 4 – Citizen Participation Plan
- Exhibit 5 – Citizen Participation Report
- Exhibit 6 – Power Point Presentation