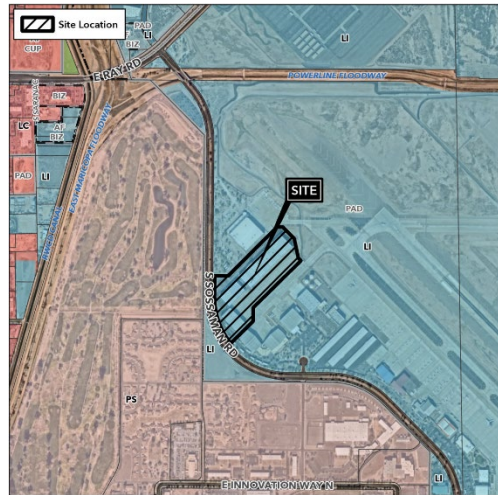




DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DIVISION

Board of Adjustment Board Staff Report

June 4, 2025

Case No.	BOA25-00335	
Project Name	Virgin Galactic	
Request	• Special Use Permit (SUP) for a modification to a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP)	
Project Location	Located at 5559 South Sossaman Road	
Parcel No(s)	304-37-004E	
Project Area	12.5± acres	
Council District	District 6	
Existing Zoning	Light Industrial with a Planned Area Development Overlay (LI-PAD)	
General Plan Designation	Regional Employment Center	
Applicant	Monica Ireland, Virgin Galactic	
Owner	Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority	
Staff Planner	Tye Hodson, Senior Planner	

Recommendation

Staff finds that the requested modification to a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) conforms to the review criteria for CSPs 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.

Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Project Overview

Request:

The applicant respectfully requests a Special Use Permit (SUP) from the Board of Adjustment to amend the Williams Gateway Airport Comprehensive Sign Plan (WGACSP) for the property located at 5559 South Sossaman Road.

When approved the WGACSP did not address provisions for temporary signage or banners. In the absence of such regulations in the WGACSP, the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) governs by default, classifying such signage under the category of Portable Signs.

If approved, this request would authorize the installation of a temporary wall banner on Lot 12, as designated in the Williams Gateway Airport Business Park – Phase I plan. The banner, classified as a type of portable sign, would be permitted for a duration of one year.

- Per Table 11-42-3 of the MZO, the maximum size for Wall Banners: 32 square feet
- Proposed: 1,040 square feet

Site Context

General Plan:

- The Placetype for the project site is Regional Employment Center with an Evolve Growth Strategy.

Zoning:

- The project site is zoned Light Industrial with a Planned Area Development Overlay (LI-PAD).

Surrounding Zoning & Use Activity:

Northwest (Across Sossaman Road) PS ASU Polytechnic Campus	North LI-PAD Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport Runway	Northeast LI-PAD Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport Runway
West (Across Sossaman Road) PS ASU Polytechnic Campus	Project Site LI-PAD Existing Hangars	East LI-PAD Mesa Gateway Airport Runway
Southwest (Across Sossaman Road) PS ASU Polytechnic Campus	South (Across Sossaman Road) PS ASU Polytechnic Campus	Southeast (Across Sossaman Road) PS ASU Polytechnic Campus

Site History:

- **January 7, 1985:** City Council approved an annexation of 4,106± acres, including the subject site, and subsequently zoned the property M-1 (equivalent to the current Light Industrial [LI]) (Ordinance No. 1907; Z86-058; Ordinance No. 2095).

- **May 7, 1996:** The Board of Adjustment approved a Special Use Permit for a Comprehensive Sign Plan, encompassing 3,172± acres of the Williams Gateway Airport, including the subject site (Case no. BA96-018).
- **May 20, 1996:** City Council approved the 3,167± acre Williams Gateway Industrial Development Master Plan, including the subject site (Case no. Z96-023, Ordinance no. 3181).
- **May 7, 2007:** City Council approved amendments to the Williams Gateway Airport Development Master Plan for 3,001± acres, including the subject site (Case no. Z07-14, Ordinance No. 4691).
- **August 29, 2019:** Planning Director approved the site plan and elevations for three hangars on the subject site through the Design Review process consistent with the requirements of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway PAD (Case No. DRB19-00362).

Project/Request Details

Site Characteristics:

The subject property is approximately 12.5± acres in size and zoned LI-PAD. The site has approximately 769 feet of street frontage along South Sossaman Road. The existing 35,896± square-foot, single-story industrial building (noted as Hanger 2 on the site plan) received a Certificate of Occupancy on May 15, 2024, per City of Mesa building records.

The proposed CSP will place one vinyl Wall Banner, per the applicant's plans, proportional with the building façade to maximize visibility from South Sossaman Road.

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

The applicant is requesting a Comprehensive Sign Plan amendment to allow the temporary placement of a 20-foot-tall x 52-foot-wide banner wall sign, totaling of 1,040 square feet. 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:

Approval Criteria - Section 11-46-3(D):

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:** The subject site is located along a curved segment of an arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH. The combination of the building's scale, the presence of mature vegetation, and proximity to the roadway significantly impairs visibility for approaching traffic. These unique physical conditions restrict clear sightlines and reduce the effectiveness of standard-sized signage for business identification. As such, an increase in allowable sign area is warranted to ensure adequate visibility and safe wayfinding, consistent with the intent of the City's signage regulations.
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:** The site's location within an industrial business park, combined with the building scale and orientation along a curved arterial roadway, presents notable challenges for capturing the

attention of passing traffic. The proposed banner's scale and design are specifically intended to address these constraints and represent a justified variation from typical sign standards.

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:** The proposed signage is designed to display as a mural, incorporating artistic and graphic elements identifying the unique character of the business. The banner serves as the only business identification visible from the South Sossaman Road frontage, addressing a key visibility challenge due to the site's orientation and surrounding development context.

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:

Approval Criteria - Section 11-70-5:

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 subject site is designated as a Regional Employment Center under the City of Mesa's 2050 General Plan, a Placetype intended to support high-tech, airport, corporate headquarters, and innovation-focused industries. The proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) advances these General Plan's objectives by promoting an innovation-focused business, strengthening Mesa's identity as a key employment hub.
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:** As noted in the applicant's narrative, the proposed banner exceeds the allowable size but is proportional to the building's façade and its location. The larger scale is intended to enhance visibility, similar to the signage allowed on the airport side of the building. This approach aligns with the district's goals of promoting high visibility for key businesses while maintaining design harmony with the surrounding area.
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:** The proposed banner is designed to function as a mural, enhancing the building's visual character while providing essential business identification. The signage will not be injurious or detrimental to adjacent properties but will enhance the overall aesthetic and community identity, supporting the general welfare of the City.
4. **Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project:** The proposed signage is intentionally non-illuminated and will operate independently of public utilities or infrastructure, as such, it will place no additional burden on municipal services.

Citizen Participation

The applicant conducted a Citizen Participation process, notifying surrounding property owners.

Required Notification:

- Property owners within 500 feet of the subject site were notified of the public hearing.
- As of the date of this report, staff have not been contacted by any resident or property owner to express support or opposition to the request.

Conditions of Approval

Staff recommends **approval** of the Comprehensive Sign Plan, subject to the following conditions:

1. Compliance with the sign plan documents submitted.
2. Compliance with all requirements of Board of Adjustment Case No. BA96-018, except as approved here.
3. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department regarding the Issuance of Permits.
4. Any sign components that become deteriorated, damaged, or weakened shall be promptly repaired or replaced.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map

Exhibit 2 – Staff Report

Exhibit 3 – Site Plan

Exhibit 4 – Comprehensive Sign Plan

Exhibit 5 – Project Narrative

Exhibit 6 – Airport Review and Approvals