

**VALLEY EXPRESS TOWING
COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN
PROJECT NARRATIVE
CITY OF MESA APPLICATION NUMBER BOA24-01073
JANUARY 15, 2025**

Business Name: Valley Express Towing
Address: 661 W Broadway Road, Mesa, Arizona 85210
Maricopa County Assessor Parcel Number: 134-10-063Q
Zoning: LI (Light Industrial)

Request

This Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) request seeks a Special Use Permit (SUP) approval by the City of Mesa Board of Adjustment for a new freestanding detached monument sign for Valley Express Towing, replacing the existing monument sign on-site. The proposed sign will be 14 feet tall, featuring a double-sided, internally illuminated sign cabinet measuring 68" x 134" (63.3 square feet). The new sign requires exceptions to the maximum sign height (12 feet to 14 feet) and the single base minimum width requirement (75% to 30%) as specified in the Mesa Sign Ordinance. This CSP, subject to approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) by the Board of Adjustment, requests these exceptions to improve the visibility and safety of the business along Broadway Road.

Justification and Review Criteria

Per Section 11-46-3.D of the Mesa Sign Ordinance, the following justifications address the review criteria for this Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) application. Section 11-46-3.D only requires one (1) of the three (3) criteria to be met in order for the Board of Adjustment to approve a new comprehensive sign plan.

1. **Criteria #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.**

Criteria #1 Response:

The development site exhibits unique physical conditions that restrict normal sign visibility. A 6-foot-tall perimeter fence along Broadway Road obstructs visibility for a sign limited to the 12-foot maximum height. The proposed 14-foot sign height ensures the cabinet will clear the fence, making it visible to vehicular traffic on Broadway Road. This road is a 5-lane major arterial street with a 40 MPH speed limit, where clear visibility is critical for drivers to make safe turning movements into the business.

Additionally, the average height of a tow truck is approximately 7 feet. The proposed 7-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.

2. **Criteria #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.**

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. The site's unique location—constructed adjacent to the southern edge of the 5-lane Broadway Road—and its outdated, car-centric development pattern contrast with the more conventional and pedestrian-oriented development typically seen within the City of Mesa.

**VALLEY EXPRESS TOWING
COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN
PROJECT NARRATIVE
CITY OF MESA APPLICATION NUMBER BOA24-01073
JANUARY 15, 2025**

Additionally, an exception is requested for the single base minimum width requirement, as outlined in Zoning Ordinance Section 11-43-2.C.1.a, which specifies, “a single base where the width of the base is a minimum of 75% of the width of the sign copy.” The proposed sign cabinet 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 90 inches (7.5 feet) wide, which is infeasible due to driveway ingress and egress constraints for tow trucks and other vehicles near the sign.

While the proposed single base width of 36 inches (3 feet) represents only 30% of the proportional width of the sign copy, it is a significant improvement over the existing pylon sign that this new sign will replace. The previous pylon sign featured a cylindrical metal pole as its base, with a diameter of only 8 inches. This resulted in a “lollipop-like” appearance, which detracted from the overall aesthetic of the site. By replacing the narrow pole with a sturdy 36-inch-wide base, the new design enhances the visual balance of the sign while maintaining functional clearance for tow trucks. Allowing this exception ensures safe vehicular movement and demonstrates consideration of the unique operational needs of this site.

3. Criteria #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 sign incorporates an internally illuminated, double-sided cabinet design that enhances readability while integrating seamlessly with the site’s architectural style. The materials used include aluminum with routed copy and acrylic push-thru letters, ensuring both durability and a high-quality aesthetic.

The sign’s color scheme aligns with the primary building colors, enhancing architectural consistency. Specifically, the sign features Sherwin Williams SW 7547 ‘Sandbar’ (a tan color) as its primary color and Sherwin Williams SW 7675 ‘Sealskin’ (a dark grey/brown color) as an accent.

Additionally, the cabinet sign is designed so that only the copy will illuminate at night. The white background of the cabinet face consists of an aluminum panel painted white, while the copy – “Valley Express Towing” and the phone number “480-899-4621” – is routed out of the aluminum face with push-thru acrylic. This design ensures that only the lettering glows at night, resulting in a clean, sophisticated appearance that reflects high-quality craftsmanship and reinforces the architectural character of the site.

Required Findings (Section 11-70-5)

In addition to the review criteria, the proposed Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) must meet the Required Findings for a Special Use Permit (SUP) per Section 11-70-5. The following justifications demonstrate compliance with these findings:

1. Finding #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.

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 – Light Industrial 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.

**VALLEY EXPRESS TOWING
COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN
PROJECT NARRATIVE
CITY OF MESA APPLICATION NUMBER BOA24-01073
JANUARY 15, 2025**

2. **Finding #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 with any other applicable City plan or policies.**

The LI – Light Industrial 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 in several ways:

- **Visibility and Functionality:** The 14-foot freestanding sign serves a crucial role in supporting Valley Express Towing's service-oriented business by ensuring clear visibility from Broadway Road, a major arterial street. This promotes safe access to the site, which is vital for a business that relies on vehicular traffic for towing and related services.
- **Architectural Compatibility:** The sign's design incorporates materials and colors that complement the architecture of the Valley Express Towing building – incorporating the matching color SW7547 'Sandbar' to match the primary tan color found on the existing building, and the matching color SW7675 'Sealskin' to match the dark grey/brown accent color found on the existing building. The incorporation of these matching colors ensures the proposed sign enhances the overall appearance of the site. By integrating with the surrounding environment, the sign contributes to maintaining the high-quality development standards intended for properties within the LI zoning district.
- **Business Support:** As the LI zoning district is designed to accommodate service-related industries, providing signage that maximizes visibility without creating visual clutter is essential to the success of the business, thus providing essential business support for the service industry. The proposed sign adheres to this principle by offering an architecturally compatible yet functional signage that improves traffic flow, supports business operations, and ensures safe vehicular access, conforming to the goals and purpose of the General Plan and the Light Industrial District.

3. **Finding #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 freestanding sign will not be injurious or detrimental to adjacent properties. Its 14-foot height is also appropriate within the existing context of Broadway Road, where other freestanding signs exceed the 12-foot height limit:

- 629 W. Broadway Road: the adjacent Valley Express Auto Repair companion business (immediately east of Valley Express Towing) has an existing freestanding sign height of 20'-4" (20.3 feet tall).
- 625 W. Broadway Road: the nearby Harwood Auto Repair (two parcels west of Valley Express Auto Repair) also has an existing freestanding sign height of 20'-4" (20.3 feet tall).

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.

**VALLEY EXPRESS TOWING
COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN
PROJECT NARRATIVE
CITY OF MESA APPLICATION NUMBER BOA24-01073
JANUARY 15, 2025**

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.

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

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. Also, there is an existing water meter located on the north side of the existing fence (adjacent to the sidewalk along the south side of Broadway Road). The installation of the new sign will not impact the existing water meter, since the new sign will be located in the same exact spot as the existing sign (located south of the existing fence on private property). In addition, no new footings will be excavated, thus avoiding any new ground disturbances.

Conclusion

Valley Express Towing, in partnership with Summit West Signs and Andrew Chi Planning, respectfully requests approval of this Comprehensive Sign Plan and the accompanying Special Use Permit (SUP). The proposed 14-foot freestanding monument sign is essential for improving visibility, enhancing traffic safety, and maintaining architectural compatibility with the site. The request aligns with the surrounding signage context along Broadway Road and supports the business's success on this major arterial street.

Narrative Author

Andrew Chi, Planner
Andrew Chi Planning
Email: andrew@andrewchiplanning.com
On Behalf Of: Summit West Signs

Attachments

1. Sign Drawings
2. Site Plans
3. Site Surveys & Photos