



PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT

Design Review Board

March 11, 2025

CASE No.: **DRB24-01010** PROJECT NAME: **Medina Station Freeway Landmark Monument**

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:	Design Review 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
DRB Hearing Date(s):	March 11, 2025 / 4:00 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Cassidy Welch, Principal Planner
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **December 10, 2024**, the Design Review Board recommended approval of the Medina Station Design Guidelines to City Council (Case No. DRB24-01010).

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. The subject request included the Medina Station Design Guidelines. (Case No. ZON23-00691; Ordinance No. 5925)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting Design Review 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On November 18, 2024, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 5866, which repealed Mesa City Code 11-43-7 and the City's FLM Design Guidelines and replaced both with a new section 11-43-7, effective December 18, 2024.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.

The Medina Station Design Guidelines were approved by the City Council on January 27, 2025. The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to facilitate high quality design within Medina Station. While the approved Design Guidelines do not explicitly reference signage, the proposed FLM reflects the desert modern architectural design, colors, and materials approved for the development.

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.

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 will be located approximately 490 feet east of Signal Butte Road and six feet north of the US 60 Freeway.

The proposed FLM consists 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 will 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:

Per Section VII.C.3 of the approved FLM guidelines, the Design Review Board shall conduct a work study session for initial review of the FLM design. Upon completion of the work study session and revision of the plans (if required), a public meeting is held for consideration and recommendation to the City Council.

The proposed FLM consists 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 will be internally illuminated but does not include an electronic message display.

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 Medina Station Design Guidelines, 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 Case No. ZON24-00876.
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