

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION  
CITY OF PALM DESERT  
STAFF REPORT**

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MEETING DATE: February 11, 2025

PREPARED BY: Kayleen Aguirre, Planning Technician

CASE NO: SARC24-0019

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE A SIGN PROGRAM AMENDMENT FOR AN EXISTING, MULTITENANT COMMERCIAL BUILDING NORTH OF HIGHWAY 111, APPROXIMATELY 505 FEET EAST OF DEEP CANYON ROAD

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the ARC approve the request for a comprehensive sign program amendment approval, determining the requirements of the findings have been met.

Any modifications required by the ARC should be added to the motion as a condition of approval.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Applicant, Jack Rivers for Canyon Print & Signs, is requesting approval of a Sign Program Amendment for an existing, multitenant commercial building (Building) north of Highway 111, approximately 505 feet east of Deep Canyon Road, at 74600 Highway 111 (Assessor's Parcel Number: 625100037).

The proposal would amend the existing Sign Program (Program) and would set guidelines for sign criteria, including size, location, construction, height, length, and illumination for all building and monument signage for the Building.

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

A. Property Description:

- On September 12, 1996, the City Council (Council) approved Resolution 96-57 for a 9,200 square-foot Precise Plan design for a 35,000 square-foot project site (Site) on the north side of Highway 111, approximately 505 feet east of Deep Canyon Road (Case No. PP 96-6). Ordinance 813 was adopted for the approval of a Zoning Map amendment on the same date to change the Site's zone from PC-4 (Resort Commercial) to PC-2 (District Commercial) (Case No. C/Z 96-4).
- On October 8, 1996, the Architectural Review Commission (ARC) approved a sign program and free-standing identification monument sign with four tenants listed, subject to the lay-out and script that would return to the commission for approval (Case No. PP 96-6). See Attachment 2 for the original Program.

- On February 25, 1997, the ARC approved the re-design of the monument sign using vertical scoring (Case No. PP 96-6).
- The Building is currently an active multitenant commercial building with tenants including “Wingstop” and “Starbucks”. It is located within an existing commercial center with two other buildings, including a singular “Albertson’s” grocery building to the north of the commercial center and another multitenant commercial building to the west. The Program is solely for the Building and would not apply to the other two commercial buildings within the commercial center.

B. Zoning, General Plan and Adjacent Uses

**Table 1 – Adjacent Land Use and Designations**

	<b>Existing Uses</b>	<b>General Plan</b>	<b>Zoning</b>
<b>Project Site</b>	General Retail Center	Suburban Retail Center	District Commercial Center (P.C.-2)
<b>North</b>	Grocery/Produce Store	Small Town Neighborhood	District Commercial Center (P.C.-2)
<b>South</b>	Full-Service Restaurant	Town Center Neighborhood	District Commercial Center (P.C.-2)
<b>West</b>	General Retail Center	Suburban Retail Center	District Commercial Center (P.C.-2)
<b>East</b>	Hotel	Suburban Retail Center	Resort Commercial Center, Scenic Preservation Overlay (PC. -4, S.P.)

C. Project Description

The Applicant is requesting a Program amendment and will be making corrections to illegible portions of the document. The proposed Program would set guidelines for sign criteria, including size, location, construction, height, length, and illumination for one (1) multitenant building, and for one (1) standalone monument sign, as shown on Exhibit 1 (next page).

### Exhibit 1 – Program Site Plan

*Tenant Main sign / Corner Units Allowed One Sign Per Fascia*

- A** **A1**  
Dual Lit (Front & Back Lit)
- B**  
Back Lit, Front lit or Dual Lit
- C**  
Back Lit, Front lit or Dual Lit
- D**  
Back Lit, Front lit or Dual Lit
- E**  
Back Lit, Front lit or Dual Lit
- F**  
Back Lit, Front lit or Dual Lit
- G** **G1**  
Back Lit, Front lit or Dual Lit

*Monument sign*

- 1**  
Double sided



The Program outlines the standards and requirements for the Building signs on the existing Building. All the Building signs are currently approved and installed. The Program does not create any nonconformities with existing signs and is intended to provide clarity for the Building moving forward.

The Program separates signage guidelines into three (3) categories: (1) Approved Signs, (2) Monument Sign, and (3) Prohibited Sign Types (Attachment 1, Page 4). The Program details submittal requirements (Attachment 1, Page 7), sign construction details (Attachment 1, Page 11), a site plan with allowed sign types (Attachment 1, Page 12), and monument sign construction details (Attachment 1, Pages 15-16).

The Program proposes a re-design for one (1) multitenant monument sign that exists along Highway 111. The one (1) multitenant monument sign is the only sign part of this Program that will have a new design from what is currently existing and approved. Details for the existing and proposed monument signs are listed in Table 2 (next page). Exhibit 2 (next page) shows the existing monument sign and Exhibit 3 (page 5) provides the proposed new monument sign. Exhibit 3 shows the proposed monument sign without finished colors but would include the existing color palette, as identified in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Monument Sign Details**

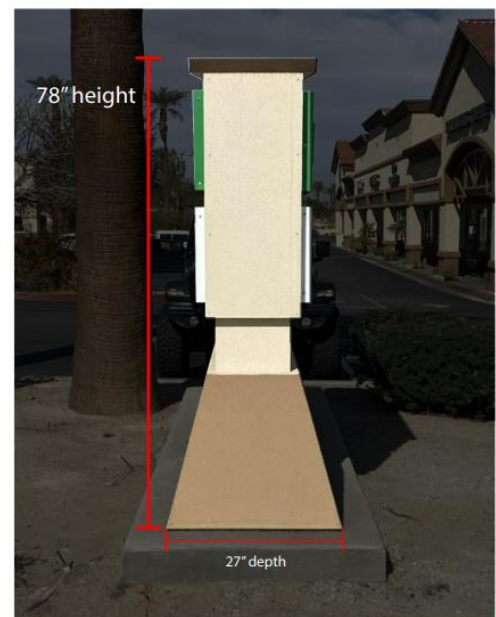
Detail	Existing (Exhibit 2)	Proposed (Exhibit 3)
<b>Panels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four (4) 15" tall panels for tenants</li> <li>Square footage: 5.2 sf (per sign)</li> <li>Projection: 1.5" retainer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven (7) 15" tall panels for tenants</li> <li>Square footage: 5.2 sf (per sign)</li> <li>Projection: 1.5" retainer</li> </ul>
<b>Monument Dimensions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Height (grade to top): 6 ft. 6 in.</li> <li>Depth: 2 ft. 3 in.</li> <li>Width: 9 ft.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Height (grade to top): 8 ft.</li> <li>Depth: 2 ft. 3 in.</li> <li>Width: 9 ft.</li> </ul>
<b>Monument Base</b>	<p><u>Concrete foundation:</u> 3" tall from grade  <u>Monument base:</u> 14" tall from concrete foundation, 120" width</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforced with concrete anchors and steel posts</li> </ul>	Same as existing.
<b>Colors &amp; Materials</b>	<p>Desert color palette</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panels: White acrylic faces</li> <li>Monument: Stucco painted tan</li> <li>Base &amp; Cap: Stucco painted deep brown</li> </ul>	Same as existing.
<b>Lighting</b>	Internally illuminated.	Same as existing.

**Exhibit 2 – Existing Monument Sign**

FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW



### Exhibit 3 – Proposed Monument Sign Dimensions



#### **ANALYSIS:**

Per Palm Desert Municipal Code (PDMC) Section 25.56.100, the purpose of a comprehensive sign program is to “integrate all of a nonresidential project’s signs with the overall site design and the structures’ design into a unified architectural statement. A comprehensive sign program provides a means for the flexible application of sign regulations in order to provide incentive and latitude in the design and display of multiple signs...”

Table 3 (next page) provides a summary of proposed development standards for the Program as compared to the City’s sign ordinance under PDMC Section 25.56.070 and guidelines from the existing Program for reference.

**Table 3 – PDMC Summary**

<b>Standard</b>	<b>PDMC Allowance</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Size (max sign area)</b>	1 sf per lineal foot of tenant frontage to a maximum of 50 sf per elevation	1 sf per lineal foot of tenant frontage to a maximum of 50 sf per elevation.	Same as existing.
<b>Sign Height</b>	Maximum height of 20 ft. from ground floor	20 ft maximum height	No mention – PDMC 20 feet will apply.
<b>Letter Height</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter height: 14” min., 24” max</li> <li>• 2 lines considered case by case.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24” total sign height, 1 line</li> <li>• 2 lines considered case by case</li> <li>• Tenants A and G (ends): 58”, 2 lines</li> </ul>
<b>Number of Signs</b>	1 per building frontage	Additional sign allowed for the north elevation shop tenant. No additional sign for the south elevation shop tenant.	1 sign per tenant leased frontage. An additional sign is allowed if the unit is an end or corner unit.
<b>Illumination Allowed</b>	Yes	Yes, non-illumination prohibited.	Same as existing.
<b>Length</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Secondary Signs</b>	Permitted per standards listed in PDMC §25.56.080C.	N/A	No mention – PDMC will apply.
<b>Monument sign</b>	50 sf of sign area 6 ft height but may be higher if necessary. Height shall not exceed 10 ft.	48 sf of sign area 6 ft height	61.5 sf of sign area 8 ft height

**ZONING ORDINANCE SUMMARY:**

Proposed comprehensive sign programs require Design Review approval by the Architectural Review Commission pursuant to PDMC Section 25.68.050(C)(3). A comprehensive sign program shall comply with the following standards, as outlined in PDMC Section 25.56.100(D):

1. The proposed sign program shall comply with the purpose and intent of this chapter.

*The intent of this chapter (PDMC Chapter 25.56 Signs) is to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan, particularly with regard to developing a City that is visually attractive and preserving and enhancing the visual aspects of the City's streets, highways, vistas, and view sheds. The purpose of these regulations is to provide each sign user an opportunity for adequate identification while guarding against excessive advertising and the confusing proliferation of signs, ensure signs are in harmony with the building, the neighborhood, and other signs in the area, and protect the safety of motorists and pedestrians by minimizing the distraction of excessive and intrusive signs as well as to protect the life, health, property, and general welfare of residents and visitors.*

*Everything proposed is in line with the intent mentioned above. The Program provides each tenant with adequate identification but not a proliferation of number of square footage of signs that is excessive. Signs are designed to be harmonious with the building and surrounding commercial uses and are designed in a way to not cause distractions to motorists as they drive by. The Program creates strict criteria to ensure that the signage on the building is attractive and enhances the visual aspects of the City meanwhile providing adequate size for businesses.*

2. The proposed signs shall enhance the overall development, be in harmony with, and relate visually to other signs included in the comprehensive sign program, to the structures and/or developments they identify, and to surrounding development when applicable.

*The proposed Program creates a uniform look for the building and provides criteria to ensure this consistency. The signs are designed to be in harmony with the building and all signs on the building. The Program has clear and detailed criteria relating to development standards, construction, sign criteria, and location. The signs are compatible with the surrounding commercial uses.*

3. The sign program shall address all signs, including permanent, temporary, and exempt signs.

*The Program provides standards for all types of signs, including permanent, temporary, and exempt signs. Additionally, information is provided for prohibited signs and the monument sign. Other types of signs, including store numbers and window signs, shall be reviewed and approved according to the standards listed in the Palm Desert Municipal Code.*

4. The sign program shall accommodate future revisions that may be required because of changes in use or tenants.

*The Program is broad enough to provide standards for a change of tenants, meanwhile still providing clear criteria for any future use or tenants in the building. Future tenants will*

*be required to submit plans for building signage to the City of Palm Desert for compliance with the sign program and Palm Desert Municipal Code.*

5. The sign program shall comply with the standards of this chapter, except that deviations are allowed with regard to sign area, total number, location, and/or height of signs to the extent that the comprehensive sign program will enhance the overall development and will more fully accomplish the purposes and intent of this chapter.

*Table 3 in the staff report provides a breakdown of where the Program deviates from the Palm Desert Municipal Code chapter on signs as well as guidelines from the existing Program for reference. The Program complies with the standards and intent of the chapter. The revised Program is designed to correct illegible portions of the existing document and to enhance the overall development, including the Building and surrounding commercial uses. The signs identified within the Program are existing and were approved under the original Program. The Program does not create any nonconformities with existing signs and provides a design to replace the existing (1) monument sign. The revisions to the existing Program are appropriate for the Building, surrounding area, and the existing signs.*

*The Program proposes to allow for deviations from PDMC standards for the proposed monument sign including a total sign area of 61.5 square feet, which is above the allowed maximum of 50 square feet, and a height of 8 feet, which is above the allowed maximum of 6 feet. Signs may be proposed with a greater height if topographic or other features necessitate a higher sign, but in no event shall the total sign height exceed 10 feet. The current monument sign is less than the maximum 50 square feet of sign area, and the proposed monument sign only increases the existing height to allow for additional signage with a proposed design to match the existing sign. It does not increase width, depth, or foundation.*

6. Approval of a comprehensive sign program shall not authorize the use of signs prohibited by this chapter.

*Approval of the Program would not include approval of individual sign permit(s). If the program is approved, the Applicant would need to apply for sign permit(s) for any individually proposed signs, subject to the review and approval of the City's Development Services Department. The Program provides information on prohibited sign types and indicates that all signs prohibited by the City of Palm Desert shall not be allowed.*

7. Review and approval of a comprehensive sign program shall not consider the signs' proposed message content.

*The sign program is written to be absent of any standards as it relates to message content and instead focuses solely on sign standards, locations, construction, and criteria. The approval of a sign program does not take into account the signs proposed message content.*



Findings for the ARC decisions of comprehensive sign program applications are listed under PDMC Section 25.56.100(E) as follows.

1. The comprehensive sign program complies with the purpose of this chapter, including the design criteria.

*The intent of PDMC Chapter 25.56 Signs is to provide regulations that allow each sign user an opportunity for adequate identification while protecting against excessive advertising and the confusing proliferation of signs. It ensures signs are in harmony with the building, the neighborhood, other signs in the area, and protects the safety of motorists and pedestrians by minimizing the distraction of excessive and intrusive signs.*

*Everything proposed within the Program is in line with the intent mentioned above. The Program provides its tenants with adequate identification. Signs are designed to be harmonious with the building and surrounding commercial uses and are designed in a way to not cause distractions to motorists that drive by. The Program creates strict criteria to ensure that signage on the building is attractive and enhances the visual aspects of the City.*

2. Proposed signs enhance the overall development and are in harmony with other signs included in the plan with the structures they identify and with surrounding development.

*The proposed Program creates a uniform look for the building and provides criteria to ensure this consistency. The signs are designed to be in harmony with the building and all signs on the building. The Program has clear and detailed criteria relating to development standards, construction, sign criteria, and location. The signs are compatible with the surrounding commercial buildings.*

3. The comprehensive sign program contains provisions to accommodate future revisions that may be required because of changes in use or tenants.

*The Program is broad enough to provide standards for a change of tenants, meanwhile still providing clear criteria for any future use or tenants in the building. Future tenants will be required to submit plans for building signage to the City of Palm Desert for compliance with the sign program and Palm Desert Municipal Code.*

4. The comprehensive sign program complies with the standards of this chapter, except that flexibility is allowed with regard to sign area, number, location, and/or height to the extent that the signs proposed under the comprehensive sign program will enhance the overall development, achieve superior quality design, and will more fully accomplish the purposes of this chapter.

*Table 3 in the staff report provides a breakdown of where the Program deviates from the Palm Desert Municipal Code chapter on signs as well as guidelines from the existing Program for reference. The Program complies with the standards and intent of the*

*chapter. The revised Program is designed to correct illegible portions of the existing document and to enhance the overall development, including the Building and surrounding commercial uses. The signs identified within the Program are existing and were approved under the original Program. The Program does not create any nonconformities with existing signs and provides a design to replace the existing (1) monument sign. The revisions to the existing Program are appropriate for the Building, surrounding area, and the existing signs.*

*The Program proposes and allows for a deviation from PDMC standards for the proposed monument sign, to allow for a sign area of 61.5 square feet, above the allowed maximum of 50 square feet, and a height of 8 feet, above the allowed maximum of 6 feet. Signs may be proposed with a greater height if topographic or other features necessitate a higher sign, but in no event shall the total sign height exceed 10 feet. The current monument sign is less than the maximum 50 square feet of sign area, and the proposed monument sign only increases the existing height to allow for additional signage with a proposed design to match the existing sign. It does not increase width, depth, or foundation. The proposed re-design of the monument sign and the Program in its entirety are appropriate and effective for the Building, its tenants, the commercial center, and the surrounding neighborhood.*

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Revised Sign Program
2. Original Sign Program