

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

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MEETING DATE: June 24, 2025

PREPARED BY: Carlos Flores, AICP, Interim Deputy Director of Development Services

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE A SIGN PROGRAM FOR AN EXISTING,  
MULTITENANT COMMERCIAL BUILDING AT 72-171 HIGHWAY 111

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

The Applicant, Signarama, is requesting approval of a Sign Program for an existing, multitenant commercial building (Building) at 72171 Highway 111 (Property), located on the northwest corner of Highway 111 and Painters Path (Assessor's Parcel Number: 640020024).

The proposal would establish a 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.

**Executive Summary:**

- **Case No.: SARC24-0009**

**Project Summary:**

**A. Property Description**

The Property is a 1.18-acre, fully improved property that takes vehicular access off Painter's Path. The Building is approximated to have been constructed in 1988 and has existed without a Sign Program. All signage was subject to review against the City of Palm Desert Municipal Code (PDMC). On July 12, 2007, the City Council approved SA 07-63 for a new freestanding sign for the Property, for "First Team Real Estate", as shown in Exhibit 1 on the next page.

Exhibit 1 – SA 07-63 Approval



This sign was constructed but has subsequently been removed, with exception to the base which currently remains, as shown in Exhibit 2 below.

Exhibit 2 – Monument Sign Base



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>	Multitenant Commercial	Employment	District Commercial Center (P.C.-2)
<b>North</b>	Vacant	Open Space	Hillside Planned Residential (HPR)
<b>South</b>	Existing Commercial	Suburban Retail Center	District Commercial Center (P.C.-2)
<b>West</b>	Vacant	Open Space	Hillside Planned Residential (HPR)
<b>East</b>	Existing Commercial	Regional Retail	District Commercial Center (P.C.-2)

C. Project Description

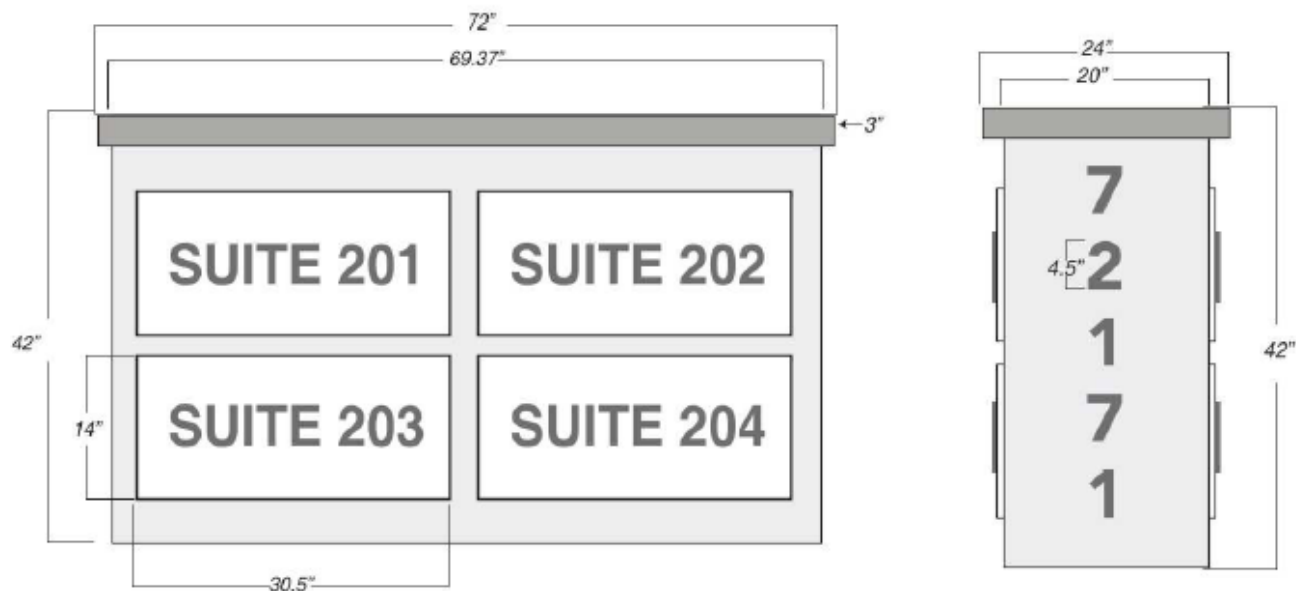
The proposed Program would set guidelines for sign criteria, including size, location, construction, height, length, and illumination for one (1) multitenant building, and for one (1) standalone monument sign.

The Program outlines the standards and requirements for Building signs on the existing Building. Any existing signs on the Building will be allowed to remain as legal nonconforming but upon new application submittal, would need to conform with the updated Program, if approved.

The Program provides objectives, general requirements, prohibited signs, maintenance, and standards for tenant identification signs and the one (1) multitenant monument sign. The Program also provides a clear site plan providing locations for all signs, elevations, and nighttime renderings. The Program would allow signage on all four (4) elevations, including nine (9) on the east elevation facing Highway 111, one (1) on the west elevation, one (1) on the south elevation, and one (1) on the north elevation. The signage would be internally illuminated, front/face-lit, individual channel letter signs attached to the building fascia.

The Program proposes one (1) multitenant monument sign along Highway 111. Details for the proposed monument sign (Monument) are found on Pages 14 and 15 of the Program. The Monument would be installed on top of the existing planter and measure 42" in height, 24" in depth, and 72" in width. The Monument would use a Dunn-Edward Igloo and Baby Seal color palette to match the Building. The tenant panels would be non-illuminated, measuring 14" x 30.5" and would face the north and south elevation. The top of the Monument would include a 3" tall cap.

Exhibit 3 – Monument Sign



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 below 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 2 – PDMC Summary

Standard	PDMC Allowance	Proposed
<b>Size (max sign area)</b>	1 sf per lineal foot of tenant frontage to a maximum of 50 sf per elevation	24" height x 88" wide (First Floor). 15" height x 60" wide (Second Floor)
<b>Sign Height</b>	Maximum height of 20 ft. from ground floor	20 feet
<b>Letter Height</b>	N/A	• N/A

<b>Number of Signs</b>	1 per building frontage	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
<b>Length</b>	N/A	88" (First Floor) 60" (Second Floor)
<b>Secondary Signs</b>	Permitted per standards listed in PDMC §25.56.080C.	No mention – PDMC will apply but only in specific sign locations
<b>Monument sign</b>	50 sf of sign area. 6 ft of height but may be higher if necessary. Height shall not exceed 10 ft.	21 sf of sign area 42" of height (3.5 feet)

**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).

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. The 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. The monument sign is smaller in scale than the previously approved version and provides a compatible color palette and design.*

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 2 in the staff report provides a comparison of the proposed Program to the Palm Desert Municipal Code. The Program complies with the standards and intent of the chapter. The proposed Program is appropriate for the Building and surrounding area. The Program provides strict locations for second-story tenants to establish clear locations and sign designs for the two-story Building.*

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Sign Program