

**COUNTY OF EL DORADO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**



<b>Agenda of:</b>	December 10, 2009
<b>Item No.:</b>	7
<b>Staff:</b>	Jonathan Fong

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

**FILE NUMBER:** S09-0018/Western Sign Monument/Tenant Sign

**APPLICANT:** Western Sign Company, David Brazelton

**AGENT:** Western Sign Company, Dennis Small

**REQUEST:** Special Use Permit to allow the installation of a new freestanding internally illuminated monument sign. The sign would be 12 feet tall with an overall sign face of approximately 102 square feet. An approximately 17 square foot digital message center would be included as part of the monument sign.

**LOCATION:** On the north side of Enterprise Road, 500 feet west of the intersection with Missouri Flat Road in the Diamond Springs Area, Supervisorial District III. (Exhibit A)

**APN:** 329-240-22 (Exhibit B)

**PARCEL SIZE:** 4.3 acres

**GENERAL PLAN:** Industrial (I) (Exhibit C)

**ZONING:** Industrial (I) (Exhibit D)

**ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:** Categorically Exempt Pursuant to Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines

**RECOMMENDATION:** Planning Services recommends the Planning Commission take the following action:

- 1) Certify the project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines; and
- 2) Approve Special Use Permit S09-0018 subject to the conditions in Attachment 1 and based on the Findings in Attachment 2, excluding the digital message center from the proposed monument sign.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:** Staff has reviewed the project for compliance with the County’s regulations and requirements. An analysis of the Special Use Permit request and issues for Planning Commission consideration are provided in the following sections.

**Project Description:** The Special Use Permit request would allow for the installation of a new on-site monument sign. The existing monument sign would be removed as part of the project.

The new sign would be 12 feet tall and approximately 12 feet wide with an overall sign area of 102 square feet. The sign would be a multi-tenant sign which would include the Western Sign Company corporate logo and eight (8) lines of tenant copy. The sign would be internally illuminated and externally illuminated. The sign face illumination includes LED push-through acrylic letters and halo lit channel letters. The proposed sign also proposes an approximately 17 square foot digital message center capable of producing electronically changeable displays. Three (3) external in-ground mounted spotlights would provide external illumination for a decorative basalt column included as part of the sign.

**Site Description:** The project site is located within the Park West Industrial Business Park. The site has been developed with a multi-tenant industrial building. An existing multi-tenant sign has been installed along Enterprise Road.

**Adjacent Land Uses:**

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
<b>Site</b>	Industrial (I)	Industrial (I)	Existing office/warehouse
<b>North</b>	I	I	Existing warehouse
<b>South</b>	I	I	Existing residential development
<b>East</b>	I	I	Existing office/warehouse
<b>West</b>	I	I	Existing office/warehouse

The site is bounded on all sides by existing industrial land uses. No portion of the proposed sign would be visible from Missouri Flat Road due to the existing topography and orientation of Enterprise Road. Planning Services staff has recommended approval of the sign with the requirement that the digital message center portion of the sign be removed. The other portions of the sign would not include design features that would be inconsistent within the Industrial area or would result in hazards to motorists or adjoining properties.

**General Plan:** The project site is designated Industrial (I) which permits a range of office, warehouse, and manufacturing uses. Signage is consistent within the (I) land use designation upon compliance with applicable development standards implemented through the County Code. The following General Plan policies would be applicable to the proposed monument sign:

**Policy 2.8.1.1** requires that development including signage be designed to reduce excessive nighttime light. The project site is located within an Industrial business park. The surrounding properties are also within the business park. No sensitive receptors would be impacted from the proposed sign. The monument sign would be internally lit via fluorescent lamps within the sign cabinet. As shown on the Sign Exhibits, the sign would incorporate decorative 'up' lighting for the decorative stone feature on the sign.

The digital message center would utilize exposed LED's. The use of exposed LED's has the capability to produce excessive glare due to the ability of LED's to produce high intensity light. Further, the high intensity LED's would potentially result in a vehicular hazard for motorists along Enterprise Way. Therefore, the use of LED readerboard signs would be considered to be inconsistent with **Policy 2.8.1.1** and Planning Services staff has recommended that approval of the Special Use Permit would exclude approval of the LED digital message center.

**Policy 2.2.5.21** requires that all development projects be designed to avoid incompatibility with the surrounding uses. The project site is located within the Park West Industrial Business Park. The proposed sign would be compatible with other multi-tenant signs within the Business Park.

Upon the removal of the digital message center portion of the sign, staff finds the project would be consistent with the General Plan.

**Zoning/Special Use Permit:** The Industrial (I) Zone District permits either two (2) signs not exceeding 50 square feet of display surface or one (1) sign not exceeding 80 square feet. The proposed monument sign would include the Western Sign Company corporate logo, tenant signage, and a stone decorative pillar. Planning Services considers the overall area of the sign to include not only the sign face area, but the area of the 'mass' of the sign which includes the space between the decorative column and the sign. This total area would be 102 square feet which would exceed the maximum sign requirements of the (I) Zone District.

Sections 17.16.070 and 17.16.080 of the County Code prohibits moving signage and signage which utilizes blinking lights which may impair vehicular traffic. Planning Services has interpreted these provisions to restrict the use of exposed LED's in signage. The potential for programmable LED signs to produce blinking effects and the intensity of LED's to produce distracting light intensity, would make the proposed digital signage to be inconsistent with the County Code. Planning Services has recommended approval of the proposed monument sign provided that the LED digital message center is removed from approval of the Special Use Permit.

Section 17.34.030(E) of the Zoning Ordinance permits signage which exceeds the area requirements of the County Code only through approval of a Special Use Permit. The County Code requires that specific findings be made prior to approval of any Special Use Permit:

1. *The issuance of the permit is consistent with the general plan;*

As discussed above, the proposed monument sign with the removal of the LED digital message center would be consistent within the Industrial General Plan Land Use Designation and would comply with applicable policies of the General Plan.

2. *The proposed use would not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood; and*

The proposed sign with the removal of the LED digital message center would not include any features that would pose a threat the public health, safety and welfare within the project area. The proposed sign would be consistent with other multi-tenant monument signs in the area.

3. *The proposed use is specifically permitted by special use permit pursuant to this Title.*

Section 17.34.030(E) authorizes approval of a Special Use Permit for signage which exceeds the maximum area allowed within the (I) Zone District.

The proposed monument sign proposes to include a 17 square foot LED digital message center which is prohibited by El Dorado County Code. Planning Services staff has recommended approval of the sign upon removal of digital message center from the Special Use Permit Request. As discussed, Staff has determined the proposed sign without the LED digital message center would be consistent with the County Code.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** Pursuant to Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines on-site signs are Categorically Exempt from CEQA and that no further environmental review is required. The proposed sign would not require additional CEQA review. Pursuant to Resolution No. 240-93, a \$50.00 processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption.

**SUPPORT INFORMATION**

**Attachments to Staff Report:**

Attachment 1 .....Conditions of Approval  
Attachment 2.....Findings for Approval  
  
Exhibit A.....Location Map  
Exhibit B .....Assessor’s Parcel Map  
Exhibit C .....General Plan Land Use Map  
Exhibit D.....Zoning Map  
Exhibit E .....Site Plan  
Exhibit F.....Proposed Sign Elevations

# ATTACHMENT 1

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

S09-0018/Western Sign Monument/Tenant Sign  
Planning Commission  
December 10, 2009

1. The project, as approved, consists of the following:

This Special Use Permit is based upon and limited to compliance with the project description, the Staff Report hearing exhibits marked Exhibits E-F and conditions of approval set forth below. Any deviations from the project description, exhibits, or conditions must be reviewed and approved by the County for conformity with this approval. Deviations may require approved changes to the permit and/or further environmental review. Deviations without the above-described approval will constitute a violation of permit approval.

### **Project Description:**

This Special Use Permit shall permit the removal of an existing monument and the replacement of a new monument sign. The signage shall meet the following requirements:

**Location:** The sign shall be located southwest corner of the project site as shown on the approved Site Plan (Exhibit E).

**Lighting:** The sign shall utilize internal illumination. The 'Western Sign Company' Logo and Tenant Sign Copy shall be internally illuminated utilizing LED's. No exposed LED's shall be permitted as part of this approval. Three in-ground, 'up' lighting fixtures would provide exterior illumination on the column accent. The lighting fixtures shall be recessed within the sign base and shall not be visible from view.

**Dimensions:** The sign shall have an overall height of 12 feet. The widest portion of the sign shall be 11 feet 6 inches wide. The sign shall display the text 'Western Sign Company' and the corporate logo. Eight (8) lines of tenant copy would be allowed each seven (7) inches in height.

**Readerboard:** No electronic message board shall be permitted as part of this approval. Prior to installation of any electronic message board, the applicant shall obtain approval of a Revision to this Special Use Permit.

**Design:** The color and design features of the monument sign shall correspond to Exhibit F of the staff report. The sign face shall utilize a brushed aluminum face with solid blue accents. A basalt column accent shall be located adjacent to the monument sign.

## Planning Services

2. **Site Improvements:** All site improvements shall conform to Exhibits F-H. Planning Services shall verify the site improvements are substantially consistent with the approved exhibits prior to issuance of a building permit.
3. **Electronic Message Board Prohibited:** No LED readerboard or similar electronic message or reader board shall be approved as part of this Special Use Permit. Planning Services staff shall verify that all electronic message boards are removed from the plans prior to issuance of a building permit.
4. **Removal of Existing Sign:** The applicant shall remove the existing monument sign on-site. Planning Services shall verify the removal of the existing sign prior to issuance of a building permit.
5. **In-ground Lighting:** The three (3) proposed in-ground, 'up' lighting fixtures shall be recessed within the signage base. No portion of the lighting fixture shall protrude beyond the horizontal plan of the signage base. Planning Services shall verify the lighting design prior to issuance of a building permit.
6. **Maintenance and review:** The applicant shall adjust the internal lighting of the sign to reduce the nighttime intensity. The applicant shall correct any lighting issues within 30 days of any written complaint to Planning Services regarding the nighttime light intensity of the sign.
7. **Hold Harmless:** In the event of any legal action instituted by a third party challenging the validity of any provision of this approval, the developer and landowner agree to be responsible for the costs of defending such suit and shall hold County harmless from any legal fees or costs County may incur as a result of such action.

The developer and land owner shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless El Dorado County and its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against El Dorado County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval of El Dorado County concerning a Special Use Permit.

The County shall notify the applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding, and the County shall cooperate fully in the defense.

8. **Processing Fees:** Prior to issuance of any permits, the applicant shall pay all Development Service fees and noticing fees.
9. **Condition Compliance:** Prior to issuance of a building permit or commencement of any use authorized by this permit, the applicant shall provide a written description, together with appropriate documentation, showing conformance of the project with each condition

imposed as part of the project approval. The applicant shall also schedule an inspection by Planning Services prior to issuance of a building permit for verification of compliance with applicable conditions of approval.

**Department of Transportation**

10. **Sign Placement:** The placement of this proposed signs shall not be within the existing right of way of Enterprise or Missouri Flat roads. In addition, this proposed sign shall not be placed in a location that will restrict sight distance as determined by the DOT.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**FINDINGS OF APPROVAL**

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Planning Commission  
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The special use permit is approved based on the following findings:

**1.0 CEQA FINDING**

**1.1** The project is Categorical Exempt pursuant to Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines which exempts on-site signage from the provisions of CEQA.

**2.0 SPECIAL USE PERMIT FINDINGS**

**2.1 The issuance of the permit is consistent with the El Dorado County General Plan;**

The project site is located within the Barnett Business Park which permits a range of industrial uses. The proposed sign would utilize design features and materials which would be consistent within an industrial area. The proposed sign would not result in objectionable glare or other vehicular hazards which would be inconsistent with the General Plan.

Approval of the proposed sign is subject to the removal of the LED digital message center portion of the sign. The exposed LEDs would result in objectionable glare and would pose a vehicular hazard to motorists along Enterprise Drive which would be incompatible with the surrounding area and inconsistent with the General Plan.

**2.2 The proposed use would not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood;**

The proposed sign would not incorporate any design features that would be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood.

The LED digital message center has the potential to produce objectionable glare and is not approved as part of this Special Use Permit approval.



**2.3 The proposed use is specifically permitted by a special use permit pursuant to this Title.**

The proposed sign exceeds the maximum sign area requirements of the (I) Zone District. Section 17.34.030(E) of the County Code would allow the increased sign area by Special Use Permit.

Chapter 17.16 of the County Code prohibits signage which produces objectionable glare, vehicular traffic impairment and moving signs. The proposed LED digital message center is excluded from approval because the message center would be inconsistent with the County Code.