

The background of the title section is a light blue illustration of a freeway interchange with a city skyline and palm trees in the distance.

FREEWAY LANDMARK MONUMENT GUIDELINES

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I. INTRODUCTION

There are thirty-six miles of existing or proposed urban freeways within the Mesa Planning Area. These miles are composed of the Red Mountain rimming north Mesa, the Superstition cutting a swath through the central City, and the San Tan in the far southeast.

The Mesa City Council has determined that the limited use of freeway identification signs for certain existing and proposed regional commercial land uses is an appropriate means to help achieve economic sustainability. The City Council also recognizes that there must be a balance between the needs of the business community and the desire of Mesa's citizens to preserve view corridors along these freeway miles.

To achieve this balance the Mesa City Council has set forth these guidelines as a means to allow freeway signage that is well designed, appropriately sited, and to the extent possible, esthetically pleasing. These Freeway Landmark Monument Guidelines are to be utilized in evaluating requests for identification signs along Mesa's urban freeway system.

II. PURPOSE AND INTENT

A. The purpose of the Freeway Landmark Monument Guidelines is to:

1. Encourage development of property in harmony with the desired character of the City while providing due regard for the public and private interests involved.
2. Promote the effectiveness of Freeway Landmark Monuments by preventing the over concentration, improper placement, deterioration, and excessive size and number.
3. Enhance the flow of traffic and the convenience, ease and enjoyment of travel along Mesa's freeways.
4. Protect travelers on Mesa's freeways from injury or damage as a result of distraction or obstruction of vision attributable to large signs.

B. The intent of the Freeway Landmark Monument Guidelines is to:

1. Regulate advertising distractions that may contribute to traffic accidents.
2. Assure that public benefits derived from expenditures of public funds for the improvement and beautification of freeways and other public structures and spaces shall be protected by exercising reasonable control over the character and design of large sign structures.
3. Provide a pleasing visual environment for the citizens of and visitors to the City of Mesa, Arizona.
4. Require that signs be properly maintained for safety and visual appearance.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following definitions are contained in Title 11, Zoning Ordinance, of the Mesa City Code:

A. Section 11-1-6

USE PERMIT, COUNCIL (C.U.P.): A discretionary authorization issued by the City Council upon a finding through a public hearing, that the proposed activity is in conformance with the intent of this Code, the General Plan and/or other specified plans of Council policies; and will be compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or the neighborhood in general. Such Council Use Permit may be limited by specific conditions, restrictions, terms or time periods.

B. Section 11-19-5

FREEWAY LANDMARK MONUMENT: A sign structure of architectural quality, which exceeds twelve feet (12') in height or eighty (80) sq.ft. in area, intended to be viewed from an adjacent freeway for purposes of identifying an associated commercial or non-commercial development.

GROUP C-O-I DEVELOPMENT: A commercial, office, or industrial development where there are located several separate business activities having appurtenant shared facilities, such as driveways, parking, and pedestrian walkways, and which is designed to provide a single area in which the public can obtain

varied products and services. Distinguishing characteristics of a group C-O-I development may, but need not, include common ownership of the real property upon which the development is located, common wall construction, and multiple-occupant use of a single structure.

IV. GUIDELINES

A. General Provisions.

1. The number of freeway landmark monuments (FLMs) per development should be limited to one (1).
2. Given other location and siting criteria (below, Item IV.B.), along any given one-mile length of freeway frontage, there should be no more than three (3) FLMs on one side of the freeway.
3. Additional FLMs for one development may be considered only in the event that both the length of the adjacent freeway frontage exceeds two thousand feet (2000') **and** the area of the development exceeds sixty acres (60 ac.).
4. The project or destination name of the development should be clearly visible and considered an emphasis of any sign area present on the FLM. As a general rule, 20% of the total sign area should be used for the project or destination name.
5. The project location or destination name should be located towards the topmost visible portion of the FLM, just under any sign embellishment (if used).
6. When a FLM is used for a group C-O-I development, the sign area used for names of individual tenants within the overall development should be considered secondary to the project or destination name. The development or destination name shall be assigned more sign area and prominence than individual tenant or store names.

B. Location and Siting. A Freeway Landmark Monument shall be located:

1. On a parcel or approved development site of at least thirty (30) contiguous acres which has frontage on a freeway and an intersecting arterial street; and
2. On property having a General Plan land use designation of Regional Commercial or Public/Semi-Public; and
3. No closer than two thousand feet (2000') from an existing or approved Freeway Landmark Monument on the same side of the freeway; and
4. A distance of no less than ten times (10 x) the proposed actual height (including sign embellishment) of the FLM from existing residential uses (based on the physical location of the FLM relative to the exterior boundary of the residential parcel). Examples: a 40' high FLM would require a minimum 400' setback; a 58' high FLM would require a minimum 580' setback; a 90' high FLM would require a minimum 900' setback from an adjacent residential property line.
5. No greater than two hundred feet (200') from the Right of Way line of the adjacent Freeway or property owned by the Arizona Department of Transportation or the City of Mesa.

C. Design and Construction. A Freeway Landmark Monument shall be designed and built:

1. No higher than reasonably necessary in order for the topmost portion of the sign (including sign embellishment) to be visible from a vehicle approaching on the same side of the freeway and located within sufficient distance to permit vehicles to safely exit the freeway. Visibility of sign area assigned to tenant(s) should not be used as the basis to justify additional sign height; and
2. Having a form, texture, color, and finish that incorporates representations complimentary to the primary architectural or natural features of the associated development or feature; and

3. Having low maintenance, architectural-grade surfacing materials such as metal, masonry, ceramic tile, glass or stucco; and
4. Having a horizontal to vertical ratio not exceeding 1:3. (The horizontal dimension shall not exceed 1/3 of the vertical dimension); and
5. Having a sign area determined by the following ratio: Maximum one (1) square foot of total sign area per two (2) lineal feet of freeway frontage. Example: A site with 1000' of lineal freeway frontage shall be limited to no more than 500 square feet of sign area on the FLM; and
6. Having a maximum sign area not in excess of 750 square feet; and
7. Limiting nighttime illumination to just the sign copy or sign message. Internally illuminated signs shall have opaque backgrounds so that only the sign copy is illuminated. Where a background is integral to the design of a corporate image or registered trademark, the background is to be colored to mute the amount of illumination.

D. Exterior Illumination. A Freeway Landmark Monument composed of exposed neon, argon or krypton tubing, exposed incandescent lighting, or other exposed artificial lighting to outline such Freeway Landmark Monument or portion thereof, is permitted provided such illumination:

1. Constitutes a design component of the overall Freeway Landmark Monument architecture; and
2. Is integrated into the primary physical elements of the Freeway Landmark Monument and is harmonious with the architectural style of the structure; and
3. Serves only for the purpose of embellishing the nighttime architecture of the Freeway Landmark Monument, and does not portray an advertising message; and

4. Is compatible with the land use and architecture of adjacent developments; and
5. Complies with the Outdoor Light Control Provisions of the Mesa City Code, and the National Electrical Code, as evidenced by submittal of complete design plans and specifications; and
6. Is fully functional. If any component of the lighting becomes nonfunctional, none of the lighting system may be illuminated until the entire lighting system is repaired and is functioning as intended.

E. Electronic Message Display. A Freeway Landmark Monument using an electronic message display is permitted provided:

1. The display is limited to text messages only, with no animation or video; and
2. The message change sequence is accomplished immediately or by means of fade or dissolve modes. Each message shall be displayed for a minimum period of one hour or at an interval specified by the City Council. No continuous, traveling or scrolling displays will be allowed; and
3. The intensity of the Light Emitting Diode (LED) display shall not exceed the levels specified in the chart below:

LED COLOR INTENSITY LEVEL (nits)

COLOR	DAYTIME	NIGHTTIME
Red only	3,150	1,125
Green only	6,300	2,250
Amber only	4,690	1,675
Full Color	7,000	2,500

4. The applicant provides written certification from the sign manufacturer that the sign's light intensity has been factory pre-set not to exceed the limits specified in the chart above, and the intensity level is protected from end-user manipulation by password-protected software or other method as deemed appropriate by the Building Safety Director.

V. MODIFICATIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

The City Council may approve modifications or alternatives to these Guidelines when:

- A. The proposed Freeway Landmark Monument incorporates special design features or unique architectural elements that represent superior quality; and
- B. Such modifications or alternatives are consistent with the intent of these Guidelines and will result in conditions that are commensurate with or superior to these Guidelines; and
- C. One of the following is present:
 - 1. An individualized assessment reveals the existence of extraordinary conditions involving topography, land ownership, adjacent development, parcel configuration, or other factors related to the development site; or
 - 2. The proposed or existing development exhibits unique characteristics of land use, architectural style, site location, physical scale, historical interest or other distinguishing feature that represents a clear variation from conventional development; or
 - 3. The proposed site is designated Mixed Use/Employment by the Mesa General Plan Land Use Map and such property is located within two (2) miles of two (2) intersecting freeways.

VI. REQUIRED SUBMITTALS WITH APPLICATION

In addition to site plan(s), elevation(s), color boards and other standard submittals typically required for Planning and Zoning Board and Design Review Board applications, the applicant shall submit additional support materials, as follows:

- A. Photographs documenting empirical observation (e.g. field test with crane and balloon). The empirical observation shall document at minimum four possible FLM heights (the proposed height plus two lower and one higher than proposed).
 - 1. Each documented option shall differ a minimum of ten feet (10') from the next option.

2. Written notice of the empirical test shall be made to the Planning Director ten (10) working days in advance of the test date.
 3. The empirical test shall be observed or verified by the Planning Director or his/her designee.
 4. Heights shown in the empirical observation shall be confirmed by an independent source: the Planning Director, his/her designee, or by professional survey.
 5. The device used to confirm the proposed heights shall have sufficient size and substance so as to provide a comparable sense of scale for the proposed sign. Examples of sufficient size and substance include four foot (4') wide banners strung between two balloons, or four foot by eight foot (4' x 8') sheets of plywood suspended in place by a crane.
 6. If balloons are used, methods to limit wind drift should be utilized, such as tethering.
- B. Computer photo simulations or other professionally rendered (to scale) perspectives in which the proposed Freeway Landmark Monument is depicted on site, as if the Freeway Landmark Monument were already in place,
1. Simulations or renderings shall depict several vantage points.
 2. At minimum, at least one of the photo simulations or renderings shall depict the view or potential view of the Freeway Landmark Monument from the same side of the freeway as the FLM placement at one quarter of a mile (1/4 mile or 1320') away from the beginning of the freeway off-ramp closest to the FLM location.
 3. Photo simulations shall include at least one view from the residential subdivision closest to the overall project site related to the FLM.
- C. A section drawing depicting the line-of-sight available to the occupants of a vehicle approaching a freeway off-ramp from one-quarter of a mile away. The top of the proposed FLM shall be used as the point of reference.

VII. APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE,
ORDER OF ADVISORY BOARD REVIEW AND GENERAL
APPROVAL PROCESS

A. Council Use Permit Requirement for Freeway Landmark
Monuments, Excerpted from Sign Ordinance, Sec 11-19-
8(D)18: General Provisions, Supplementary Provisions:

A Freeway Landmark Monument is permitted in all zoning districts, subject to the approval of a Council Use Permit in accordance with the Administration and Procedures Chapter of this Ordinance. In addition to the findings required for approval of a Council Use Permit as specified in the definition contained in Section 11-1-6 of this Title, a Freeway Landmark Monument may be approved only upon a finding by the City Council that such Freeway Landmark Monument is in compliance with the location parameters, operational limits, and design standards specified in the Freeway Landmark Monument Guidelines.

B. Citizen Participation Requirements, Sec 11-18-15:

The applicant is required to do the following before a Council Use Permit application for a Freeway Landmark Monument is filed. All items listed below shall be in addition to all Citizen Participation plans, actions and reports specified by Mesa Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-18-15 Citizen Participation:

1. Hold a neighborhood meeting to present and discuss the proposal, and receive, document and respond to citizen input.
 - a. Schedule the neighborhood meeting at a convenient time and location for the public, in relatively close proximity (within two miles, if possible) to the site of the proposed Freeway Landmark Monument.
 - b. Mail Notices of the neighborhood meeting to all property owners within a distance of three hundred feet plus an additional distance of fifteen times the proposed actual FLM height (including sign embellishment) from the exterior boundary of the development site [Notice radius = (15 x FLM height)+300'] Examples: A 40' high FLM would require a 900 foot notification radius. A 63' high FLM would require a 1245 foot notification radius).

- c. Mail Notices of the neighborhood meeting to all homeowner groups, property owner groups, and neighborhood associations registered with the City and located within one mile (1 mile) of the proposed FLM location (excluding highway or street rights-of-way).
- d. All notice letters shall be mailed First Class - US Postal Service and postmarked a minimum of two weeks (14 days) before the required neighborhood meeting is held.

2. At the neighborhood meeting, make available for viewing all items required to be submitted in support of the Council Use Permit Application for a Freeway Landmark Monument, as described in Item VI. (Above).
3. Complete all other citizen participation plans and steps as required of an application for a Council Use Permit (see Mesa Zoning Ordinance, Sec 11-18-15 – Citizen Participation).

B. Applications and Fees, Sec 11-18-8:

Applications for Council Use Permits (CUPs) shall be made in the office of the Planning Division on a form provided and shall be accompanied by a fee of \$1,200.00.

C. Planning and Zoning Board and Design Review Board Recommendations Required, Sign Ordinance, Sec 11-19-8(D)18:

Before any such Council Use Permit shall be considered by the Council, the request shall be referred to:

1. The Design Review Board to review and forward its recommendations to the City Council. The review by the Design Review Board shall be limited to consideration of specific design, materials, and architectural features of the proposed Freeway Landmark Monument.
2. The Planning and Zoning Board to hold a public hearing review, and forward a recommendation to the City Council.

3. The order of review for the Council Use Permit shall be
 - a. Design Review Board - Work Study Session - for initial review of the FLM design, and for dialogue with the applicant.
 - b. Planning and Zoning Board – Public Hearing - for public hearing and to forward its recommendation to City Council.
 - c. Design Review Board - Public Meeting - for consideration and to forward its recommendation to City Council.
 - d. City Council - for considering and acting on CUP application.

D. Additional Requirements Relating to Requests for Council Use Permits (Excerpted from Sec 11-18-7: Planning and Zoning Board, Planning Hearing Officer and City Council)

When a Council Use Permit is required for any structure, facility, or use specified in this Ordinance:

1. Any existing structure, facility, or use shall not be modified, altered, enlarged or expanded, unless a Council Use Permit has been approved in accordance with the procedures set forth in this Chapter. The issuance of a Council Use Permit shall require that the existing development site be brought into substantial conformance with the terms of the Mesa City Code, including but not limited to: signs, landscaping, screening, parking, and storm water retention.
2. The City Council may prescribe in connection with any Council Use Permit such conditions as deemed necessary of appropriate in order to fully carry out the provisions and intent of this Ordinance.
3. A Council Use Permit granted pursuant to this Chapter may be suspended, revoked or modified, upon a finding at a public hearing as specified in this Chapter, that any condition, stipulation, or term of the approval of said Council Use Permit has been violated.