



# STAFF REPORT

## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

September 19, 2024

**ITEM TITLE: STEVE ABBO (APPLICANT); CONSTRUCTION OF ONE NEW WALL SIGN, ONE NEW MONUMENT SIGN, NEW LIGHTING, AND THE INSTALLATION OF NEW LANDSCAPING IN EXISTING LANDSCAPED AREAS AT AN EXISTING GAS STATION AT 681 HIGHWAY 75 (APN 626-250-12-00) USE-24-0036 MF 1631**

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Business Owner of Stars and Stripes Gas station, which is located in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use) Zone, has initiated the process to construct one new wall sign, one new monument sign, new lighting, and install new landscaping in existing landscaped areas at an existing gas station.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Design Review Board approve Resolution 2024-01 for the construction of a new wall sign, new monument sign, new lighting, and new landscaping in existing landscaped areas with the following conditions of approval:

- Reduce the total window signage to 35% to comply with Imperial Beach Municipal Code (IBMC) Section 19.52.050 Table "B".
- Reduce the total area of the proposed monument sign to 40 sq. ft. to comply with Imperial Beach Municipal Code (IBMC) Section 19.52.050 Table "B".

**RATIONALE:**

The project should contribute favorably to the mixed-use corridor and would comply with the purpose of the C/MU-1 Zone, which is to provide areas for mixed-use development, multiple-family dwellings, and for businesses to meet the local demand for commercial goods and services. It is intended that the dominant type of commercial activity in the C/MU-1 Zone will be community and neighborhood serving retail and office uses.

**OPTIONS:**

In addition to approving Resolution 2024-01 and adopting staff's conditions of approval, the Design Review Board can:

- Recommend approval of the project design; or

- Recommend revisions and request further consideration at a future Design Review Board meeting; or
- Recommend approval of the project with additional conditions provided by the Design Review Board.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

An application (USE-24-0036) was submitted to the City on June 11, 2024, for Administrative Sign Permit (ASP-24-0014), Design Review Case (DRC-24-0004), and Site Plan Review (SPR-24-0004) proposing to construct one new wall sign, one new monument sign, new lighting, and install new landscaping in existing landscaped areas at an existing gas station at 681 Highway 75 (APN 626-250-12-00) in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed Use) Zone. The project site is located adjacent to two design corridors (Palm Avenue and Highway 75) with the previous façade improvements being reviewed by the Design Review Board. As such, the proposed improvements require design review by the Design Review Board. The project site is an existing 20,801.50 square foot lot with an existing gas station that fronts Highway 75 to the north, 7<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, Palm Avenue to the south, and a public alley to the west. The project will maintain its existing vehicular ingress and egress on Highway 75, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and Palm Avenue. The surrounding areas (north, east, south, and west) are zoned C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed Use) Zone, which is similar to the subject site and the surrounding uses are commercial and residential in character. The property to the west is zoned C/MU-1 and is residential in character.

### Wall Sign:

The project is proposing one new 66 square foot wall sign on the east elevation of the existing gas station. The existing “Beach Side Station” wall signage and will be removed and replaced for the new business Stars & Stripes Food Mart”. The proposed wall sign is rectangular in shape and would read “STARS & STRIPES FOOD MART”. The design proposes to utilize white and blue channel lettering on an aluminum background overlaid with a digital print of the American flag in red, white, and blue. Section 19.52.050 of the Imperial Beach Municipal Code states that signs in the General Commercial & Mixed-Use Zone shall not exceed one square foot per lineal foot of wall face. The wall sign on the east elevation proposes 66 square feet of signage on an approximately 100 lineal foot length wall. The proposed signage for Stars & Stripes Gas Station complies with Chapter 19.52 of the Imperial Beach Municipal Code because the allowable building signage will not be exceeded. The purpose of the sign regulations is to encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication in the City and to maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment and the City’s ability to attract sources of economic development and growth.



signs in the General Commercial & Mixed-Use Zone shall not exceed one square foot per lineal foot of wall face. The wall sign on the east elevation proposes 66 square feet of signage on an approximately 100 lineal foot length wall. The proposed signage for Stars & Stripes Gas Station complies with Chapter 19.52 of the Imperial Beach Municipal Code because the allowable building signage will not be exceeded. The purpose of the sign regulations is to encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication in the City and to maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment and the City’s ability to attract sources of economic development and growth.

### Window Signage:

The project is proposing window signage on the east and north elevation of the existing building. The window signage will read “COLD BEER, TOBACCO, EXOTIC SNACKS, ENERGY DRINKS” in white channel lettering. The window signage will also be overlaid with the American Flag in red,

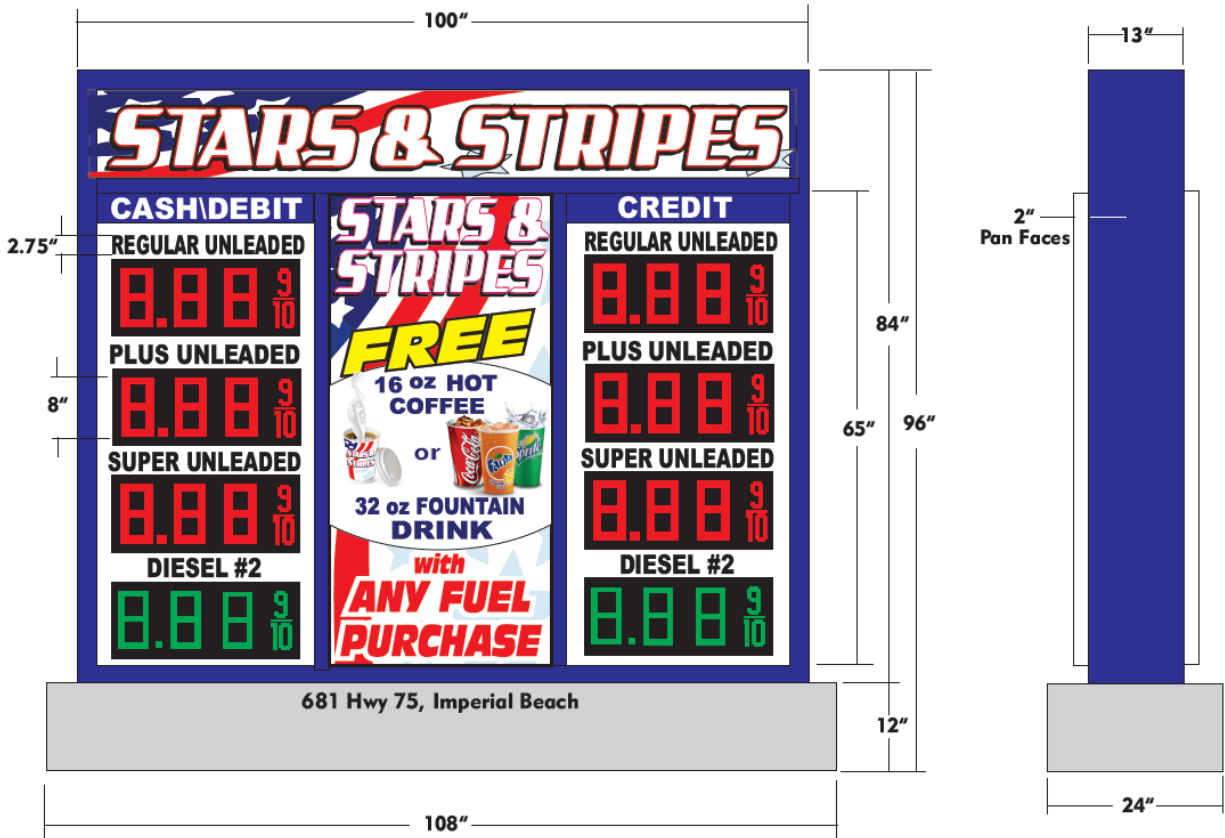
white, and blue. The total proposed window signage is 65% of the total window area. Per Imperial Beach Municipal Code (IBMC) 19.52.050 "Table B" window signage shall not exceed more than 35% of the total window area. Staff recommends that business owner reduce the window signage to 35% of the total window area to comply Imperial Beach Municipal Code (IBMC) 19.52.050 Table "B".



Monument Sign:

The face of the existing "Beach Side Station" monument sign will be refaced and replaced with new vinyl overlays on each side of the existing cabinet. In addition, the existing monument cabinet would be extended 12" vertically to add additional signage. The 8' – 4" x 7' (58.33 sq. ft.) sign, located on northeastern corner of the property, will have a blue border with digital gas prices that include regular unleaded, plus unleaded, super unleaded, and diesel gasoline. The center of the monument sign will be refaced and would read "STARS & STRIPES, FREE 16 OZ HOT COFFEE

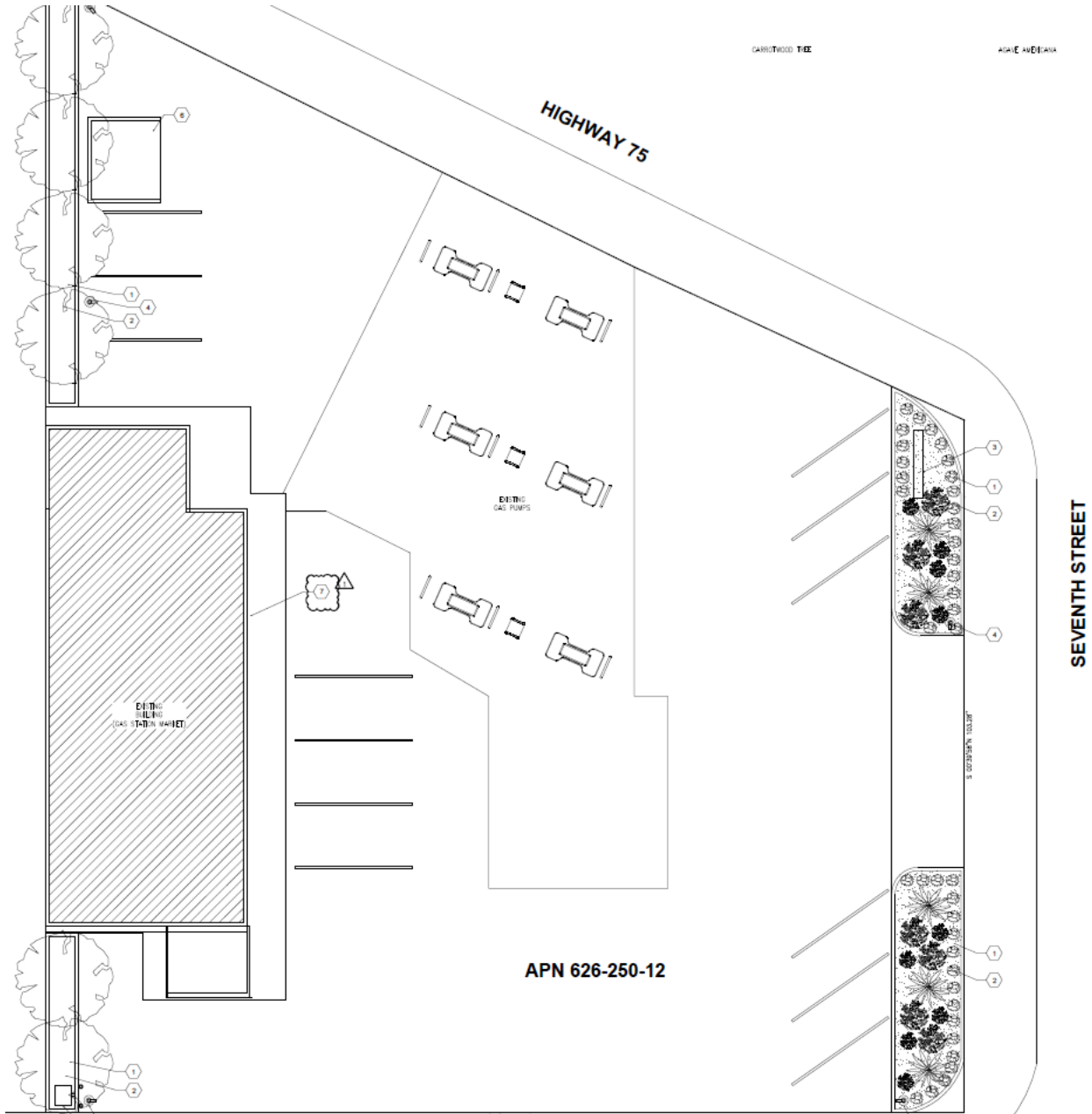
OR 32 OZ FOUNTAIN DRINK WITH ANY FUEL PURCHASE” with an American flag background in red, white, and blue. Per IBMC 19.52.050 “Table B” freestanding signs shall not exceed 40 sq. ft. and 8’ in height in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed use) Zone. In order to be compliant with IBMC Section 19.52.050, staff recommends that the total signage for the proposed monument sign be reduced to 40 sq. ft.



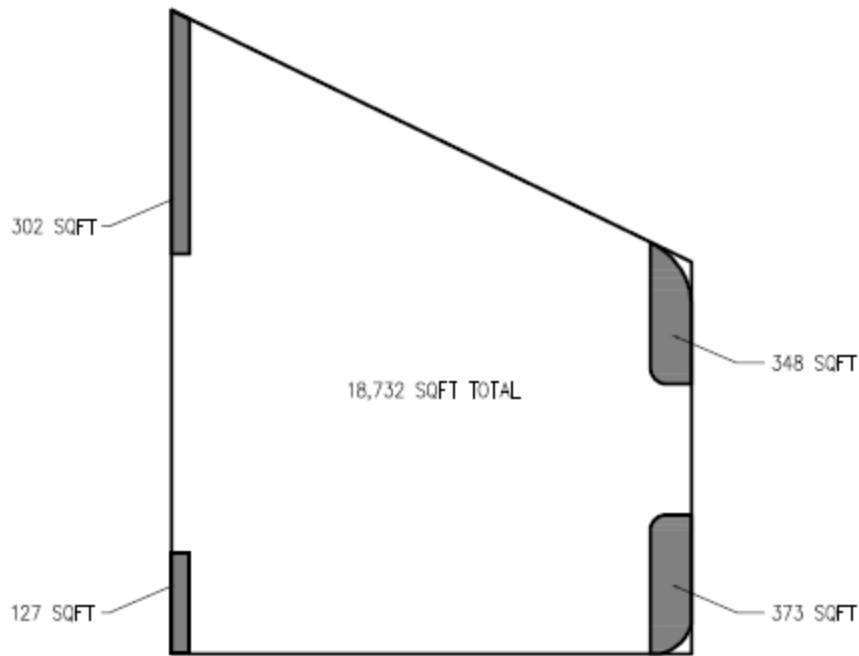
Landscaping:

Typically, new commercial development requires that 15% of the total site be landscaped. However, existing commercial developments that do not propose substantial construction pursuant to IBMC 19.26.020. “C” must maintain the existing amount of landscaping (IBMC 19.50.031). The business is proposing new landscaping in existing landscaped areas. The new landscaping will utilize the exiting irrigation that is to remain. The overall site is 18,732 sq. ft. and business owner is proposing to maintain the existing 6.13% (1150 sq.ft. / 18,732 sq. ft) of landscaped area. The new landscaping in the existing landscaped areas includes (6) new Carrotwood Trees, (5) new Agave Plants, (16) new Lavendar Plants, (40) new seasonal flowers. The business owner has stated that they reviewed the feasibility of providing additional landscaping, however providing additional landscaping on-site would require the removal of existing asphalt and the reduction of existing parking spaces that exist today.

# Landscape Plan



## LANDSCAPE AREA PERCENTAGE







EXISTING SQUARE FOOTAGE: 18,732  
 EXISTING LANDSCAPING SQUARE FOOTAGE: 1150  


---

 PERCENTAGE OF EXISTING LANDSCAPING: 6.13%

## PLANTING LEGEND

SYMBOL	TREE / PLANT SPECIES	SIZING	QTY
	(N) CARROTWOOD TREES	36" BOX ( 8-10' TALL )	6
	(N) AGAVE PLANTS (MIX OF AGAVE AMERICANA AND SALMIANA)	VARIED 5-15 GALLONS	5
	(N) LAVENDER	8-10 GALLONS	16
	(N) SEASONAL FLOWERS	1-2 GALLONS	40

### Lighting:

Currently, the property has five existing light post located on each corner of the property (North-West North-East, South-East, and South-West). Each light post will be replaced with a 15' square bronze light pole. The light pole proposes to utilize a Juyace 300W LED parking lot light dusk to dawn LED.

**General Plan Consistency:**

The project is located in the C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed Use) Zone. The purpose of the C/MU-1 Zone is to provide areas for mixed-use development, multiple-family dwellings, and for businesses to meet the local demand for commercial goods and services. It is intended that the dominant type of commercial activity in the C/MU-1 Zone will be community and neighborhood serving retail and office uses. The proposed commercial use (gas station) meets the purpose and intent of the land use designation as there is no change in use and is permitted with a Conditional Use Permit per IBMC 19.23.010 Land Use Table. A Conditional Use Permit is not required as there is no change use from what exists today.

**Zoning Chart:**

Chapter 19.52	Provided/Proposed
<p>IBMC 19.52.050 Signs allowed on private property</p> <p>Signs shall be allowed on private property in the City in accordance with and only in accordance with Table "A." If a "Yes" appears for a sign type in a column, such a sign is allowed in the zones represented by that column. If a "No" appears for a sign type in a column, such a sign is not allowed in the zones represented by that column under any circumstances.</p> <p>Although permitted under the previous paragraph, a sign designated by a "Yes" in Table "A" shall be allowed only if:</p> <p>A. The sum of the area of all building and freestanding signs on the lot conforms with the maximum permitted sign area as determined by the formula for the zone in which the lot is located as specified in Table "A";</p> <p>B. The size, location, and number of signs on the lot conform with the requirements of Table "B," which establishes permitted sign dimensions by sign type, and with any additional limitations listed in Table "A"; and</p> <p>C. The characteristics of the sign conform with the limitations of Tables "A" and "B."</p>	<p>A. The proposed wall sign complies with the sign type, size, location, and number of signs per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "A" and Table "B".</p> <p>The proposed monument sign is a permitted freestanding sign per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "A". The proposed monument sign does not comply with the maximum allowed signage requirements per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "B". Staff recommends reducing the size of the proposed monument sign to 40 sq. ft.</p> <p>B. The proposed wall sign complies with the sign type, size, location, and number of signs per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "A" and Table "B".</p> <p>The proposed monument sign is a permitted freestanding sign per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "A". The proposed monument sign does not comply with the maximum allowed signage requirements per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "B". Staff recommends reducing the size of the proposed monument sign to 40 sq. ft.</p> <p>C. The proposed wall sign complies with the sign type, size, location, and number of signs per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "A" and Table "B".</p> <p>The proposed monument sign is a permitted freestanding sign per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "A". The proposed monument sign is a permitted</p>

	<p>freestanding sign per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "A". The proposed monument sign does not comply with the maximum allowed signage requirements per IBMC Section 19.52.050 Table "B". Staff recommends reducing the size of the proposed monument sign to 40 sq. ft.</p>
--	--

Chapter 19.50 Open Space and Landscaping	Provided/Proposed
<p>IBMC 19.50.030 Commercial Landscaping</p> <p>A. Not less than fifteen percent of the total site shall be landscaped and permanently maintained.</p>	<p>A. Typically, new commercial development requires that 15% of the total site be landscaped. However, existing commercial developments that do not propose substantial construction pursuant to IBMC 19.26.020. "C" must maintain the existing amount of landscaping (IBMC 19.50.031). The business is proposing new landscaping in existing landscaped areas. The new landscaping will utilize the existing irrigation that is to remain. The overall site is 18,732 sq. ft. and business owner is proposing to maintain the existing 6.13% (1150 sq.ft. / 18,732 sq. ft) of landscaped area. The new landscaping in the existing landscaped areas include (6) new Carrotwood Trees, (5) new Agave Plants, (16) new Lavendar Plants, (40) new seasonal flowers. The business owner has stated that they reviewed the feasibility of providing additional landscaping, however providing additional landscaping on-site would require the removal of existing asphalt and the reduction of existing parking spaces that exist today.</p>

**Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:**

Surrounding Areas	Surrounding Zoning	Surrounding Land Use
North	C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use)	Commercial



South	C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use)	Commercial
East	C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use)	Public Space (Park)
West	C/MU-1 (General Commercial & Mixed-Use)	Residential

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:**

This project may categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) Guidelines Section 15303(e) New Construction of Small Accessory Structures.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. ATT 1 – Project Plans
2. ATT 2 – DRB Resolution 2024-01
3. ATT 3 – Design Review Compliance Check list