



CITY of CALABASAS
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2021

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS

FROM: GLENN MICHITSCH, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2021-1752, APPROVING FILE NOS. SGNP-2021-003, SGN-2021-008 AND MSCP-2021-005, A REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A NEW SIGN PROGRAM, AND FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ONE MONUMENT SIGN, FOUR BUILDING-MOUNTED SIGNS, 3 VINYL WINDOW SIGNS, AND ONE VINYL ADDRESS (INFORMATIONAL) SIGN FOR THE AUDI AUTO DEALERSHIP LOCATED AT 24650 CALABASAS ROAD (APN: 2069-009-027) WITHIN THE COMMERCIAL LIMITED (CL) ZONING DISTRICT, AND THE SCENIC CORRIDOR (-SC) AND COMMERCIAL AUTO RETAILER (CAR) OVERLAY ZONES. REQUESTED PERMITS INCLUDE: A SIGN PROGRAM, SIGN PERMIT, AND A MINOR SCENIC CORRIDOR PERMIT.

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2021

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-1752 (Attachment A), approving File No(s). SGNP-2021-003, SGN-2021-008, and MSCP-2021-005, a request for a Sign Program, Sign Permit and Minor Scenic Corridor Permit to establish a new sign program, and for the installation of 1 monument sign, 4 building mounted signs, 3 vinyl window (informational) signs, and 1 vinyl address (informational) sign for the Audi automobile dealership located at 24650 Calabasas Road.

BACKGROUND:

On June 6, 2019, the Planning Commission approved PC Resolution No. 2019-687, for a remodel and addition to the existing Audi auto dealership. Approvals for

the remodel included modifications to site access and circulation, building additions to the showroom and service areas, rooftop vehicle inventory parking, and a complete façade enhancement of the existing building to reflect Audi’s corporate branded building design/image. However, the applications approved in 2019 did not include upgrades to the building signage. The remodel, addition and façade enhancement are currently under construction, with a targeted completion by January 2022.

Now, Audi is requesting to upgrade the dealership’s signs to be consistent with Audi’s corporate image and to be consistent with the building’s new appearance. Applications for the installation of nine new signs (which includes both a Sign Permit [SGN-2021-008] and Minor Scenic Corridor Permit [MSCP-2021-005]) were submitted on May 14, 2021. On August 9, 2021, the requested applications were amended to include a Sign Program application (SGNP-2021-003). The applications also include a request for a monument sign up to the maximum allowed sign height and area of 25 feet high and 150 sq. ft. respectively (consistent with the provisions of the Calabasas Road District, which is defined in CMC Section 17.30.080(B)(3) as the area along Calabasas Road between Mureau Road on the west and Parkway Calabasas on the east). Pursuant to CMC Section 17.30.080(B)(3), this sign may be granted approval by the City Council if the Council finds that an increase in monument sign height and area are necessary to allow the applicant visibility comparable to other properties in the District. On September 24, 2021, the City’s Architectural Review Panel (ARP) reviewed the sign program and signs, and recommended approval of the signs as designed. The Panel further noted their support of the proposed monument sign. Subsequently, applications were deemed complete on October 6, 2021. Finally, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on October 21, 2021, took public testimony, deliberated and recommended approval of the sign program and all proposed signs by a 4-0 vote.

A more comprehensive description of the subject project, its history, and analyses are provided in the Planning Commission staff report, which is attached hereto as Attachment D. To avoid repetition, this report focuses only on a summary of the project and significant issues, the Planning Commission deliberations and actions, and staff’s recommendation.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

A. Proposed Project / Code Compliance

The proposed project includes requests to establish a new sign program, and approval for the installation of eight building-mounted signs and one monument sign. Attachment C includes plans and details for the proposed

sign program and signs. Table 1 below summarizes the nine proposed signs, including sign type, number of each sign type, area, height, proposed illumination, and compliance with CMC Chapter 17.30 (Signs).

Table 1

Type	No.	Proposed Area	Proposed Height	Description / Illumination	Compliance With CMC Chapter 17.30
Building Mounted – Franchise Sign (Sign #1)	1	62.64 sq. ft. (one sign face)	Below Roofline	Business Identification featuring the Audi “Rings” Logo – Poly One white plastic sign face – internally illuminated.	Yes
Building Mounted – Retail Tenant Identification Sign (Sign #2a and #2b)	1	49.08 sq. ft. (one sign face)	Below Roofline	Business Identification featuring – “Audi Calabasas” – acrylic sign faces and returns – Internally Illuminated	Yes
Building Mounted – Retail Tenant Identification Sign (Secondary) (Sign #3)	1	2.7 sq. ft. (one sign face)	Below Roofline	Business Identification featuring the Audi “rings” logo and business name “Audi” – acrylic sign faces – non-illuminated	Yes
Building Mounted – Special Service Sign (Sign #4)	1	6 sq. ft. (one sign face)	Below Roofline	Accessory Use Identification featuring “Service” – acrylic sign face and returns – internally illuminated	Yes
Monument Sign (Sign #5)	1	150 sq. ft. * (two sign faces)	25 ft. *	Business Identification featuring the Audi “Rings” logo, business name “Audi”, and the property address	Yes *
Window Signs (Sign #6, #7 & #8)	3	2.95 sq. ft. (one sign face)	5 ft.	Informational signs featuring business name “Audi Calabasas”, days and hours of operation – vinyl – non-illuminated	Yes** (Exempt)
Informational Sign (Sign #9)	1	2.44 sq. ft. (one sign face)	Below Roofline	Informational sign featuring the street address – vinyl – non-illuminated	Yes** (Exempt)

**Per CMC Section 17.30.080(B)(3), the maximum sign height and sign area for monument signs in the Calabasas Road District is 20 feet high and 100 sq. ft. in area; however, the City Council may grant an exception to sign height and area, up to a maximum of 25 feet high and 150 sq. ft. in area.*

***Per CMC Section 17.30.030(D), informational signs, less than 4 sq. ft. that indicate addresses, telephone numbers, emergency address and telephone numbers, hours and days of operation, credit information, and whether a business is open or closed are exempt from Code permitting requirements.*

CMC Chapter 17.30 contains the City’s sign regulations, including provisions for sign type, sign class, maximum number, maximum area, maximum height, location requirements, illumination, and some additional requirements. It also contains the City’s Sign Design Criteria (CMC Section 17.30.060), which address a sign’s relationship to the structure and other onsite signs, illumination, materials, colors, maintenance requirements, relationship to street rights-of-way, and screening of electrical transformer boxes. As is indicated in Table 1 (above), all nine signs meet the provisions of CMC Chapter 17.30, including maximum number, maximum area requirements, maximum height, location requirements, and illumination type.

The proposed signs also meet the City's Sign Design Criteria. The new design of the Audi dealership is a modern-style building that includes the use of a unique (gray colored) honeycomb metal cladding, 25-foot-tall glass storefront windows that wrap around the side of the building, and gray color CMU block walls for rear portions of the structure.

Audi's proposed signs all utilize Audi's corporate branded colors which include silver, gray, red, and a day/night color scheme (displays as black color during the day and a white color when illuminated at night), and are complementary to the updated color scheme of the building (as approved and under construction). Sign copy for the prominent building-mounted signs (Sign #1, #2a, #2b, #3, and #4) include acrylic sign faces and returns, and illumination for Signs #1, #2a, #2b, and #4 will be internal via LED bulbs. Sign #3 is much smaller and non-illuminated. Sign #5, the monument sign, includes the use of gray colored Alucobond metal paneling, with the sign copy using acrylic sign faces with internal illumination. The four (Code-exempt) informational signs (Sign #6, #7, #8, and #9) are all vinyl and non-illuminated. The use of acrylic sign faces and internal illumination (through acrylic sign faces) will provide crisp, easy to read graphics, but with soft, dark-sky-friendly lighting that minimizes light spillage onto the public right-of-way and adjacent properties (see Attachment F).

The monument sign is proposed to be situated in a landscape area near the eastern driveway entrance, and will be placed 20 feet from Calabasas Road so as not to impede sight lines for vehicles, bicyclists or pedestrians. None of the proposed signs project into right-of-ways, driveways or sidewalks. Furthermore, the use of acrylic and metal for the proposed signs is durable, and all signs utilize uniform font, style, lettering and graphics for design consistency.

B. Scenic Corridor / West Calabasas Road Master Plan / Architectural Review Panel (ARP)

The project site is located within the US 101 Freeway (urban) Scenic Corridor. To this end, new signs must comply with design standards contained within the Scenic Corridor Design Guidelines. The Scenic Corridor Design Guidelines state that signs should be visually proportionate to the building façade, have balance and scale with the building mass, and contain colors, lettering style and size consistent with adjacent signs. As described above, all the proposed on-site signs utilize the same color scheme and building materials for internal consistency. In terms of proportionality, all the building mounted signs are subordinate to the mass and scale of the structure (see Attachment C, pp. 7-9).

The monument sign is proposed at a height of 25 feet and an area of 150 sq. ft. The sign will be sited within a landscape area in the northeastern portion of the site, adjacent to the eastern driveway. Given its location, and placement on a site with a street frontage of approximately 381 feet, and a building that measures approximately 246 feet in width and has elements up to 44 feet in height, the monument sign is visually proportionate to both the site and dealership building.

The project site is also located within the West Calabasas Road Master Plan area (WCRMP). The WCRMP, adopted in 2006, provides additional guidance for sign design. Similar to the City's Sign Design Standards described above, the design criteria contained in the WCRMP encourage clear imaging, soft lighting, and colors and materials complimentary to the building. To this end, and for the same reasons described above, the proposed signs meet the WCRMP design guidance.

The project was reviewed by the City's ARP on September 24, 2021, who considered the design of the signs, and consistency with both the Scenic Corridor Design Guidelines and the WCRMP. The ARP recommended approval of the signs as designed (Attachment G). The ARP also expressed support of the proposed 25 foot sign height and 150 sq. ft. sign area.

C. Monument Sign Justification

Per CMC Section 17.30.080(B)(3), the City Council may approve monument signs within the Calabasas Road District up to a maximum height of 25 feet and maximum area of 150 sq. ft. if the Council finds that the added height and area are necessary to allow the applicant visibility comparable to other properties in the Calabasas Road District.

In this case, visibility of the subject site is limited to eastbound travelers on the US 101 freeway due to topography associated with the Mureau Road freeway overpass bridge and its related embankments, and by existing mature landscaping. Because of this, eastbound travelers do not get a good view of the property until they reach a location aligned with the building, while being able to view through their windshields only those buildings, landscape features, and signs located beyond (east) of the Audi site. The increased height and area of the monument sign will help eastbound travelers see the sign and recognize the Audi dealership before they drive past. Furthermore, two of the other automobile dealerships in the Calabasas Road District, BMW and Mercedes, have monument signs at a 25 foot height, and an area of up to 150 sq. ft. To this end, the proposed

monument sign is warranted to offer the Audi automobile dealership comparable visibility to other properties in the area.

D. Planning Commission Recommendation

The subject applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission during a public hearing on October 21, 2021. Both the applicant and one member of the public spoke on the project. After deliberation, the Planning Commission voted 4-0 to recommend approval of all applications to the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The processing of this application was paid for by the developer via Planning application fees, as established by the current fee schedule. If approved, all development costs are borne by the applicant. No negative fiscal impacts or City costs are associated with this project, if approved.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REVIEW:

This project is Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (e)(2) (Existing Facilities) and Section 15311 (Class 11 – Accessory Structures (a) on-premise signs) of the California CEQA Guidelines.

REQUESTED ACTION:

That the City Council adopt City Council Resolution No. 2021-1752 (Attachment A), approving File No(s). SGNP-2021-003, SGN-2021-008, and MSCP-2021-005, a request for a Sign Program, Sign Permit and Minor Scenic Corridor Permit to establish a new sign program, and for the installation of 1 monument sign, 4 building mounted signs, 3 vinyl window (informational) signs, and 1 vinyl address (informational) sign for the Audi automobile dealership located at 24650 Calabasas Road.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A:** City Council Resolution No. 2021-1752
- Attachment B:** Planning Commission Resolution No. 2021-734
- Attachment C:** Sign Program / Plans
- Attachment D:** Planning Commission Staff Report from October 21, 2021
- Attachment E:** Draft Planning Commission Minutes from October 21, 2021
- Attachment F:** Examples of Installed Audi Signage
- Attachment G:** Draft ARP Minutes from September 24, 2021