



STAFF REPORT 5/7/2025

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Adrian Moreno, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: Architectural Review No. 25-01 Variance No. 25-02 Variance 25-03 Ocean Mist Signage a request for Architectural Review Approval for (4) directional signs, (1) monument sign, and (1) main building sign at the Ocean Mist Farm property and a design variance for (1) monument sign and a location variance for two directional signs to be within the public Right of Way at Enterprise Way at 52300 Enterprise Way (Assessor Parcel Number 763-131-029 and 763-131-088) and determining that the proposed project is compliant with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15311. Applicant: Daniel Martinez

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC2025-06 denying Architectural Review No. 25-01 for (4) directional signs, (1) monument sign, and (1) main building sign at the Ocean Mist Farm property and for the denial of a variance from design standard for (1) monument sign. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC2025-07 approving the location variance for two directional signs to be within the public Right of Way at 52300 Enterprise Way.

BACKGROUND:

The Ocean Mist Farms property is an existing produce shipping company at 52300 Enterprise Way. On November 19, 2024, a case was opened by the City of Coachella Code Enforcement Division due to the construction of signage without a permit. The applicant constructed and installed the proposed main building sign and the proposed monument sign without a permit. After the code enforcement case was opened, the applicant submitted a permit to install (4) directional signs, (1) monument sign, and (1) main building sign at the property. The (4) directional signs are to replace (5) existing directional signs of wooden construction that were never permitted by the city, and have been up since at least 2018. Records show the existing monument sign on the corner of Enterprise Way and Industrial Way, and the existing main building



sign did have previously approved permits, and they are being requested to be replaced as part of the proposed project.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The applicant proposes (4) directional signs, (1) monument sign, and (1) main building sign at 52300 Enterprise Way. Two of the proposed directional signs are proposed on the southern parcel along Industrial Way. Two of the proposed directional signs are proposed on the northern parcel along Enterprise Way and are within the public Right of Way (R.O.W.). The applicant is requesting a location variance for the (2) directional signs on Enterprise Way. The applicant is requesting (1) monument sign at the corner of Enterprise Way and Industrial Way. The applicant is requesting a design variance for the monument sign. The applicant also proposes to replace the existing building sign at the front elevation of the building. The project is on two existing parcels, the northern parcel is zoned Manufacturing Service (M-S) at APN: 763-131-029 and the southern parcel is zoned Heavy Industrial (M-H) at APN: 763-131-088. The surrounding uses are as follows:

- North:** Ocean Mist Farms Shipping (M-S, Manufacturing Service zone).
- South:** Vacant Land (M-H, Heavy Industrial).
- East:** Vacant Land, and Desert Valley Date agricultural production facility (M-H, Heavy Industrial).
- West:** Anthony Vineyards agricultural shipping facility (M-H, Heavy Industrial).

Design

The proposed (4) directional signs, (1) monument sign, and (1) main building sign at the property meet size standards per the Coachella municipal code, see municipal code requirements analysis (Attachment 6 – Municipal Code analysis). The proposed signs do not meet the design requirements required by the municipal code and requested by staff. See below design discussion for the proposed signs.

Design - Main Building Sign

The proposed main building sign is a 100 square foot (sq. ft.) sign that provides channel letters and a blue acrylic backing with green trim. The proposed main building sign does not meet staff design request to remove the acrylic sign backing. This design request by staff is not a municipal code requirement, however the request is consistent with design direction staff provides for all signage in the city to ensure a high-quality design. In 2019, the applicant was approved for main building signage that did have sign backing.



Figure 1 - 2019 Approved Main Building



Figure 2 - Proposed Sign

Design - Monument Sign

The proposed monument sign is a 108 sq. ft. freestanding sign on the northeast corner of Enterprise Way and Industrial Way. The size of the sign is the same as the previously approved monument sign at the same location. The proposed sign provides a vinyl design that does not meet municipal code design requirements to incorporate the design and materials accenting the architectural theme of the buildings on the same property. Staff requested the applicant to provide a sign similar to the Ocean Mist Farms property in Castroville, California where the monument sign does match the architectural theme of the building. The proposed sign only provides flat letters, which is not consistent with staff design direction to provide individual channel letters or recessed or pop-out letters. This design request by staff is not a municipal code requirement, however the request is consistent with design direction staff provides for all signage in the city to ensure a high-quality design.



Figure 3 - 2019 Approved Monument Sign



Figure 4 - Proposed Monument Sign



Figure 5 - Example Monument Sign Castroville, CA

Design - Directional Signs

The applicant proposes (4) directional signs that are 27.47 sq. ft. in size, with a 3.7 sq. ft. base, at a total of 4' 4" in height. These signs are to replace existing wood construction directional signs that city records show were constructed without a permit. The proposed signs provide a vinyl design that does not meet staff's design direction for the signs to incorporate the design and materials accenting the architectural theme of the buildings on the same property. The proposed sign only provides flat letters, which is not consistent with staff design direction to provide individual channel letters or recessed or pop-out letters. Staff requested the applicant to provide a sign similar to the Ocean Mist Farms property in Castroville, California where the directional sign provides a stucco design that matches the architectural theme of the respective building. There are no municipal code requirements for directional signage for commercial or industrial projects, however directional signs for public and quasi-public uses require meeting design standards requested by the Director of Planning. Similarly, staff requests the applicant comply with the above standards to achieve a high-quality design.



Figure 6 - Existing Unpermitted Signage



Figure 7 - Proposed Directional Signage



Figure 8 - Example Directional Signage Castroville, CA

VARIANCE FINDINGS – DESIGN VARIANCE

Finding 1 – That the strict application of the provisions of this chapter would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the chapter the Coachella Municipal Code.

The applicant requests a design variance to construct a monument sign at the northeast corner of Industrial Way and Enterprise Way. The code requires that monument signage incorporate the design and materials accenting the architectural theme of the buildings on the same property. The proposed vinyl monument sign does not meet this municipal code requirement. The strict application of the chapter would not result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship. To meet the design requirements of the code, the applicant may redesign the sign to provide a stucco design or other high-quality design to be compatible with the architectural theme of the building and be in compliance with municipal code requirements. There would not be any practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships that would prevent the applicant to meet municipal code design requirements.

Finding 2 – There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity.

There are no special circumstances that are unique to the property that would prevent the applicant to redesign the vinyl monument sign to meet municipal code requirements.

Finding 3 – The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity, but which, because of such special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships is denied to the property in question

As discussed in Finding 2 above, the design variance is not necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right for the construction of a monument sign. The applicant may redesign the sign to be compliant with municipal code requirements.

Finding 4 – The granting of the proposed variance would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located.

The granting of the design variance for the proposed monument sign would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare, as the design of the sign would not impact public welfare.

Finding 5 - The granting of the design variance for the proposed monument sign would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare, as the design of the sign would not impact public welfare.

VARIANCE FINDINGS – LOCATION VARIANCE

See below staff findings for the location variance:

Finding 1 – That the strict application of the provisions of this chapter would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the chapter the Coachella Municipal Code.

The applicant requests a location variance to construct proposed directional signs within the public right-of-way. The municipal code requires that the signs be outside the public right-of-way. The strict application of the chapter would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship. The directional signs are requested by the applicant to provide directional information signs to improve circulation and truck movements, and are not intended as advertisements. The directional signs ensures that trucks use proper entrance and exit routes that improves traffic circulation in the right-of-way and provides an overall public benefit. The applicant only has 5 feet of property between the property line and the fence line. To meet the municipal code requirements, the applicant would need to provide directional signs within the 5 feet between the property line and the fence line, or provide a block wall mounted directional sign. These types of signs outside the public right-of-way may not effectively communicate the necessary entrance and exit routes, and would result in a practical difficulty and unnecessary hardship to effectively ensure proper traffic circulation on the site.

Finding 2 – There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity.

There are special circumstances that do not generally apply to other property in the same zone or vicinity, where the unique circumstance is that there are several parking areas including a parking lot separated by Industrial Way. As a result, parking for the site may be unclear and the variance is necessary to ensure adequate traffic circulation.

Finding 3 – The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity, but which, because of such special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships is denied to the property in question

As discussed in Finding 2 above, there is a special circumstance that makes the location variance necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right to provide adequate traffic circulation.

Finding 4 – The granting of the proposed variance would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located.

The granting of the location variance for the sign to be within the public right-of-way would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zone, as staff circulated this project for review, and there were no concerns from the Fire Department, Utilities Department, Building Division, or Engineering Department regarding the location of the signs. The Engineering Department

states that they are supportive of the location variance based on circulation and engineering elements.

Finding 5 – The granting of the location variance would not adversely affect any element of the General Plan, as the General Plan does not preclude the location of directional signs within the public right-of-way.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONSIDERATION

The City of Coachella has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a Class 1, Accessory Structures, exemption as the project consists of the construction and replacement of signage (CEQA Guidelines 15311). As such, no additional environmental review or further mitigation is required for this request.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis contained herein and the findings listed below, staff is recommending the following:

Architectural Review and Design

1. The Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC2025-06 denying Architectural Review No. 25-01 and Variance No. 25-02 with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.

Location Variance

2. The Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC2025-07 approving Variance No. 25-03 with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.

ALTERNATIVES:

Architectural Review and Design

- 1) Not approve Resolution No. PC 2025-06, and request that staff prepare a Planning Commission Resolution for approval of Architectural Review No. 25-01 Variance No. 25-02.
- 2) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

Location Variance

- 3) Approve Resolution No. PC 2025-07 with modifications recommended by Planning Commission

- 4) Not approve Resolution No. PC 2025-07, and request that staff prepare a Planning Commission Resolution for denial of Variance No. 25-03.
- 5) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

Attachments:

1. Attach 1 - Resolution No. PC2025-06 for Denial – Architecture and Design
2. Attach 2 - Resolution No. PC2025-07 for Approval – Location Variance
3. Attach 2 – Exhibit A – Site Plan
4. Attach 3 – Signage Plans
5. Attach 4 – Vicinity Map
6. Attach 5 – Site Photos
7. Attach 6 - Municipal Code Requirements Analysis
8. Attach 7 - Staff and Outside Agency Comments