



Planning Commission Agenda Report

Meeting Date: August 3, 2023

Department: Community Development

INITIATED BY: Marie Luna, Senior Planner

SUBMITTED BY: Gayle Ackerman, AICP, Director of Community Development

REVIEWED BY: Amy Stonich, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development

SUBJECT: PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM 11-22-5581 ESTABLISHING CRITERIA AND REGULATIONS FOR SIGNS AT THE SHOPS AT PORTOLA HILLS AND PORTOLA SENIOR APARTMENTS LOCATED IN THE PORTOLA MIXED-USE BUILDING AT 901 AND 931 PORTOLA OAKS DRIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Planned Sign Program (“PSP”) 11-22-5581 is a request to establish sign criteria and regulations for the Shops at Portola Hills located within the Portola Mixed Use Building in Portola Center. The City Council approved Site Development Permit (“SDP”) 10-15-4843 on May 17, 2016, for the development of a four-story mixed-use building with approximately 10,000 square feet of retail commercial on the first floor, a manager’s apartment unit, and 57 senior affordable apartments on the second through fourth floors. Construction of the project is near completion and apartment residents and retail tenants are expected to move-in during Fall 2023. At present, no retail tenants have been secured but the applicant is actively pursuing leads.

The proposed PSP provides standards for retail tenant wall signs, a residential tenant wall sign, a center identification monument sign, and two directional signs. The applicant is requesting two deviations to the City’s Sign Code related to the height of the center identification monument sign and the number of permitted awning signs. The proposed signage, with the approval of this planned sign program, is in compliance with the City’s Zoning Code and the Portola Center Area Plan.



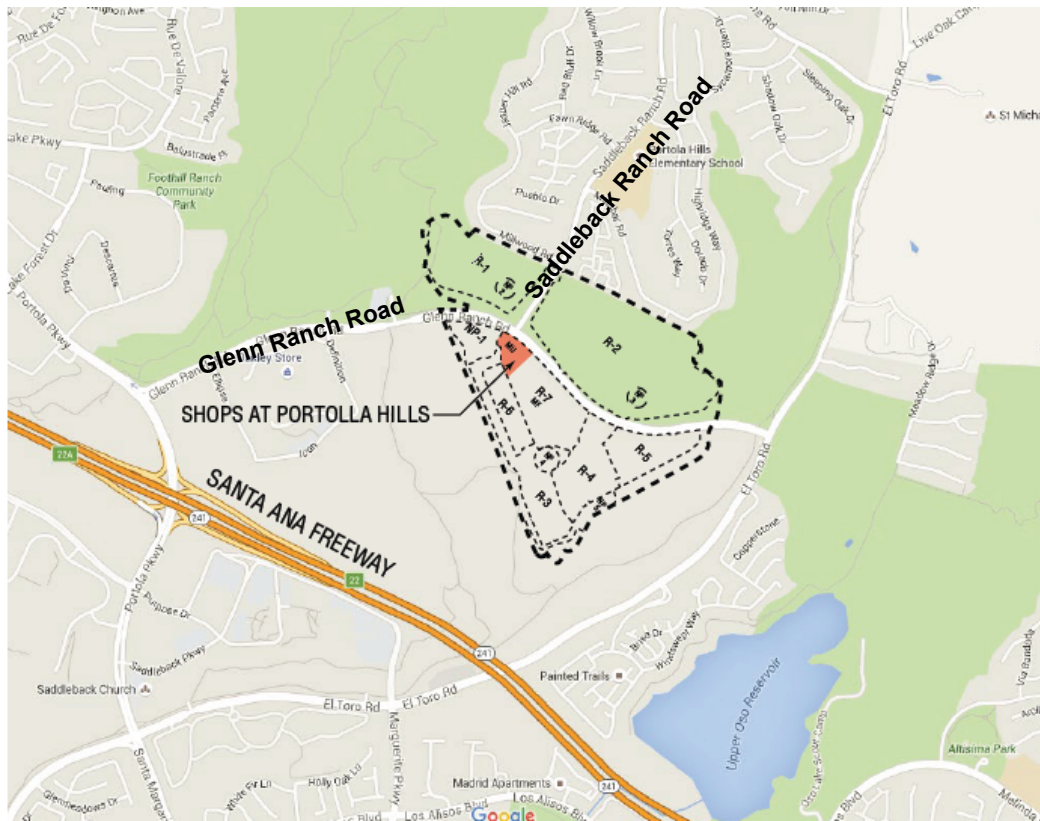
Portola Mixed-Use Building Photo Simulation of Sign

SITE INFORMATION:

Site Address	901 and 931 Portola Oaks Drive, in Portola Center South (IronRidge) located at the southwest corner of Glenn Ranch Road and Portola Oaks Drive.
Assessor Parcel Number(s)	606-341-09
Applicant/Agent	Omar Dandashi
Property Owner	Portola Senior Housing Associates, LLC
General Plan Designation	Mixed-Use
Zoning District	Mixed-Use, Portola Hills Planned Community
Site Size	1.97 acres

Surrounding Area

	Land Uses	Zoning
North	Low Density Residential (Single Family)	Portola Hills Planned Community Residential
South	Medium Density Residential (Multi-Family)	Portola Hills Planned Community Residential
East	Community Park/Open Space	Park (Portola Hills Planned Community)
West	Low Density Residential (Single Family)	Portola Hills Planned Community Residential

Location Map**RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

1. Approve a categorical exemption for Planned Sign Program 11-22-5581 pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15311, Class 11(a) – on premises signs, and direct the Director of Community Development to prepare and file with the Clerk of the County of Orange a Notice of Exemption pursuant to Public Resources Code Sec. 21152(b) and CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15062;
2. Adopt a resolution entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKE FOREST, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM 11-22-5581 ESTABLISHING CRITERIA AND REGULATIONS FOR SIGNS AT THE SHOPS AT PORTOLA HILLS AND PORTOLA SENIOR APARTMENTS LOCATED IN THE PORTOLA MIXED-USE BUILDING AT 901 AND 931 PORTOLA OAKS DRIVE, RESPECTIVELY, IN PORTOLA CENTER SOUTH, LAKE FOREST, CALIFORNIA.

BACKGROUND:

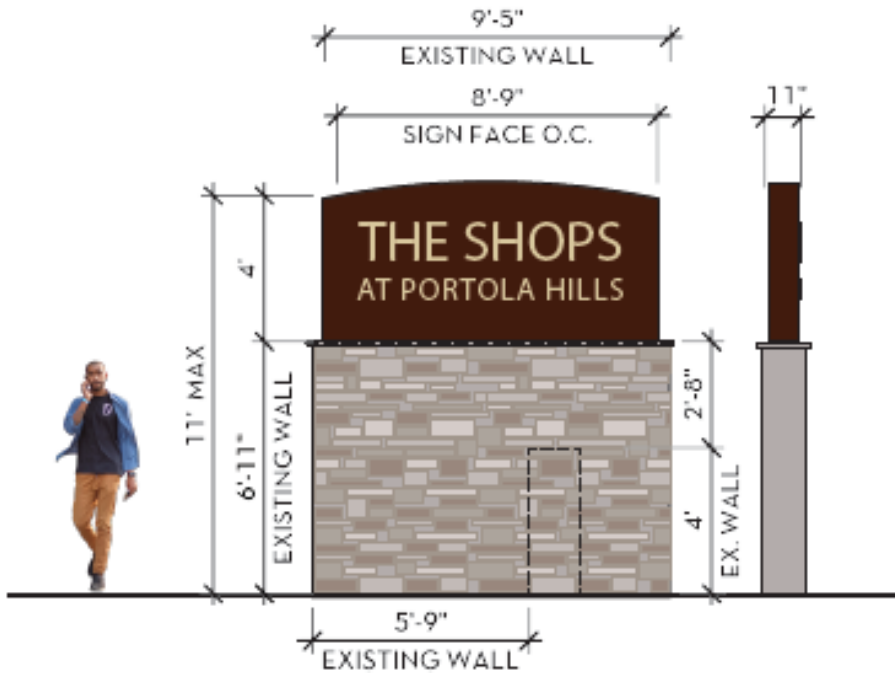

On May 17, 2016, the City Council approved Site Development Permit (“SDP”) 10-15-4843 for the development of a four-story mixed-use building located in Portola Center South at the southwest corner of Glenn Ranch Road and Portola Oaks Drive. The project includes approximately 10,000 square-feet of retail space for up to 12 commercial units on the first floor, and 58 apartment units, including 57 one-bedroom senior affordable apartments for seniors 62 years + on floors two through four. Project construction began on May 13, 2022, and completion is anticipated in Fall 2023.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The signage proposed for the mixed-use building includes one monument sign, two vehicle directional monument signs, and tenant wall signs including fabric and metal awning signs. All signs will either be internally illuminated or backlit, and they will be controlled by a timer and turned off at 10:00 p.m. Graphic 1 shows the proposed location for some of the signs. For a complete view of the signage locations please see pages 5 through 7 of the Planned Sign Program, Attachment 2. Table 1 below includes a description of each proposed sign.

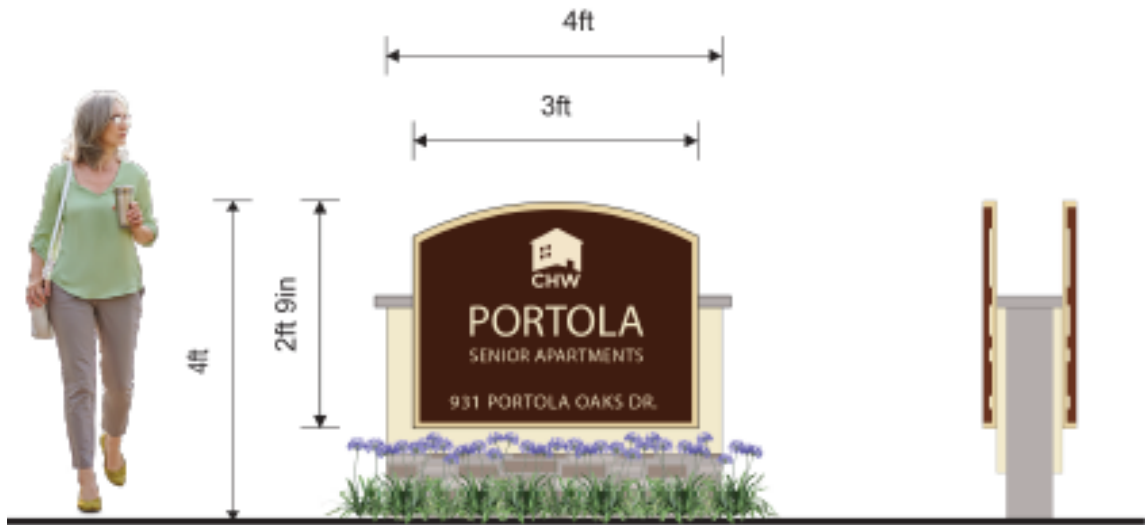
Graphic 1: Proposed Sign Locations

Table 1: Proposed Signage

<p>A</p> <p>Monument Sign</p>	 <p>The diagram shows a monument sign with a stone base and a dark brown sign face. A person is shown for scale. Dimensions include: 9'-5" EXISTING WALL, 8'-9" SIGN FACE O.C., 11' MAX height, 4' sign face height, 6'-11" EXISTING WALL, 5'-9" EXISTING WALL, 2'-8" EX. WALL, and 11" top section. The sign face reads "THE SHOPS AT PORTOLA HILLS".</p> <p><u>Sign Height:</u> 11 feet <u>Sign Width:</u> 9 feet, 5 inches <u>Sign Square Footage:</u> 104 square feet</p>
<p>B1</p> <p>Vehicle Directional Monument Sign (double-sided)</p>	 <p>The diagram shows a vehicle directional monument sign with a sign face and a stone base. A person is shown for scale. Dimensions include: 4ft sign face width, 3ft sign face height, 4ft sign face height, and 2ft 9in sign face height. The sign face reads "THE SHOPS AT PORTOLA HILLS".</p> <p><u>Sign Height:</u> 4 feet <u>Letter/Logo Height:</u> 2 feet/9 inches <u>Sign Square Footage:</u> 20 square feet</p>

B2

**Vehicle
Directional
Monument
Sign
(double-
sided)**



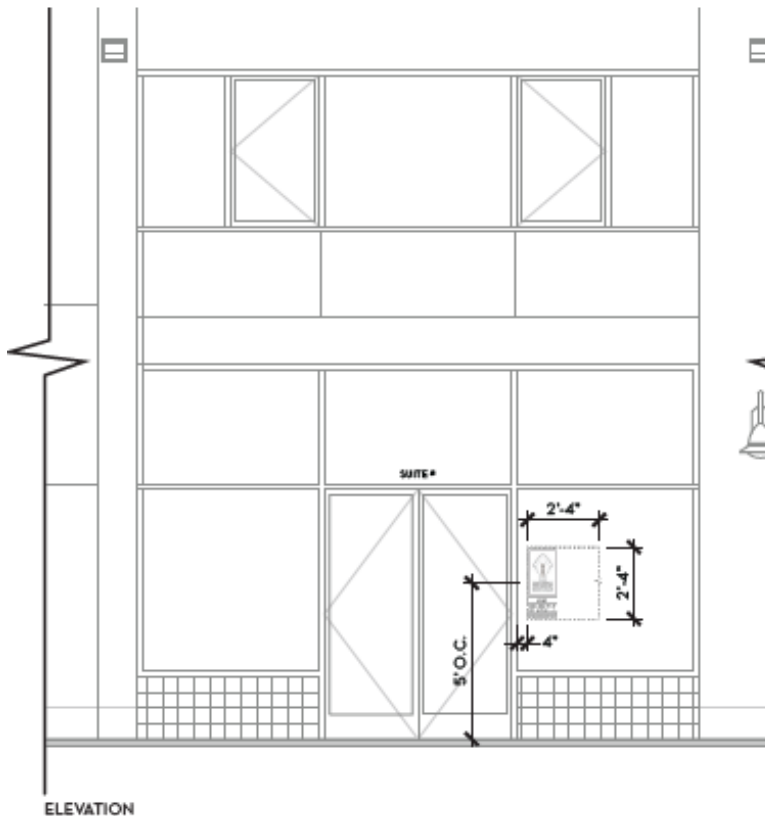
Sign Height: 4 feet

Letter/Logo Height: 2 feet/9 inches

Sign Square Footage: 20 square feet

C

**Tenant
Suite
Address
and Suite
ID**

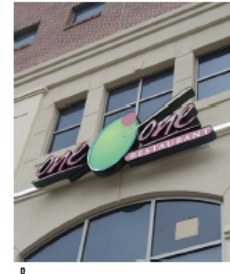
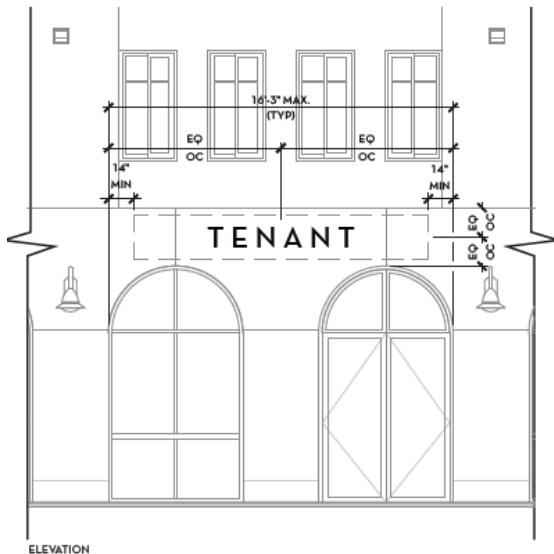


Logo: 2 square feet maximum

Letter Height: 2 ¾ inches

D

Tenant Wall Signs
(11 max., 1 per suites B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L

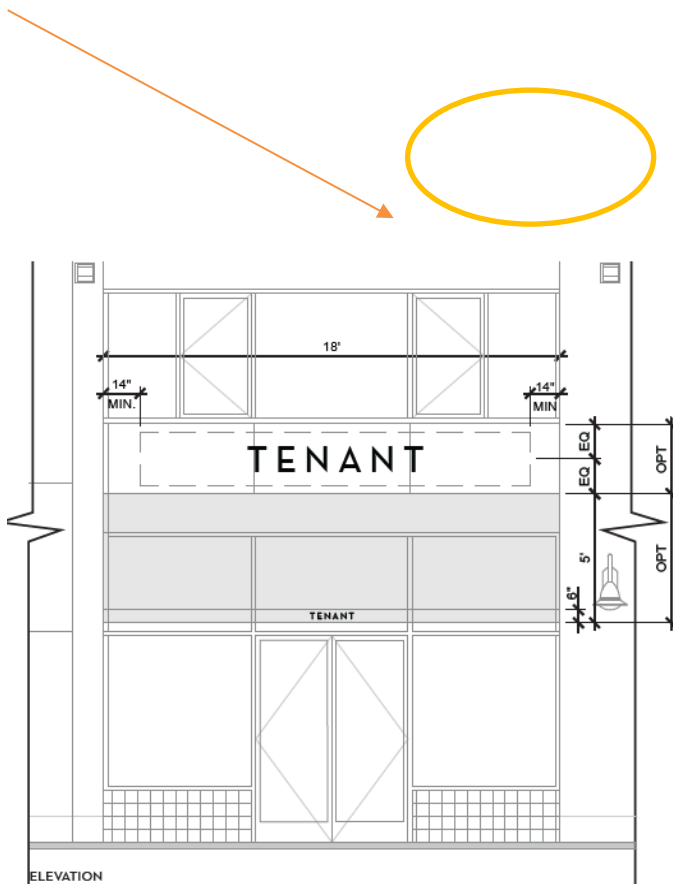


Letter Height: 18 inches maximum for a single line of signage
2 lines of signage 24 inches maximum.

Maximum size: 1 square foot per 1 lineal foot of tenant space, up to 100 square feet.

E

Tenant ID Fabric Awning Signs
(4 max. 1 per suite may be added to suites F, G, H, and I in addition to tenant wall sign)

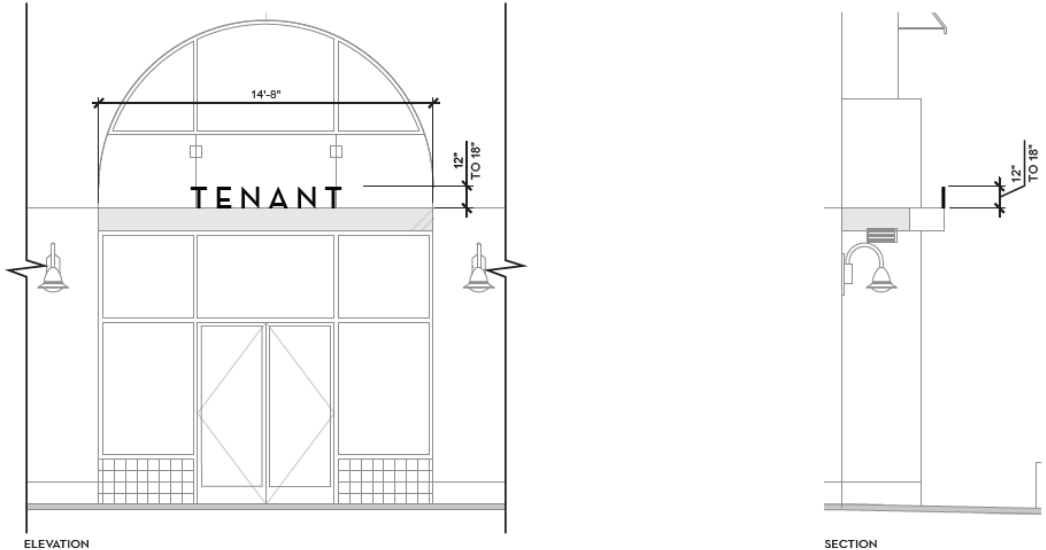
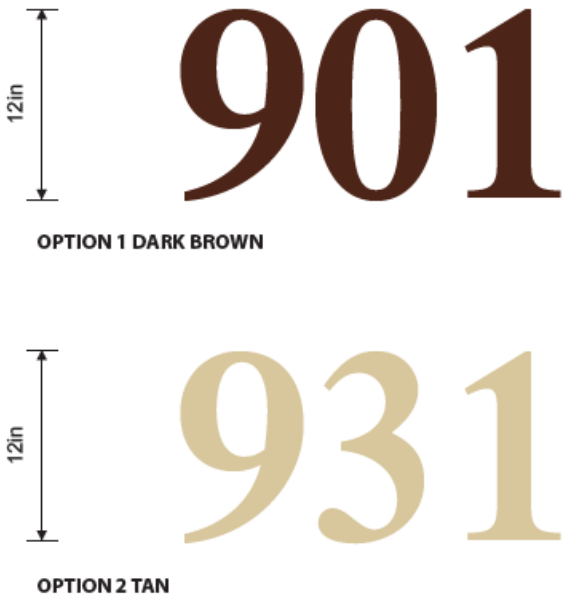


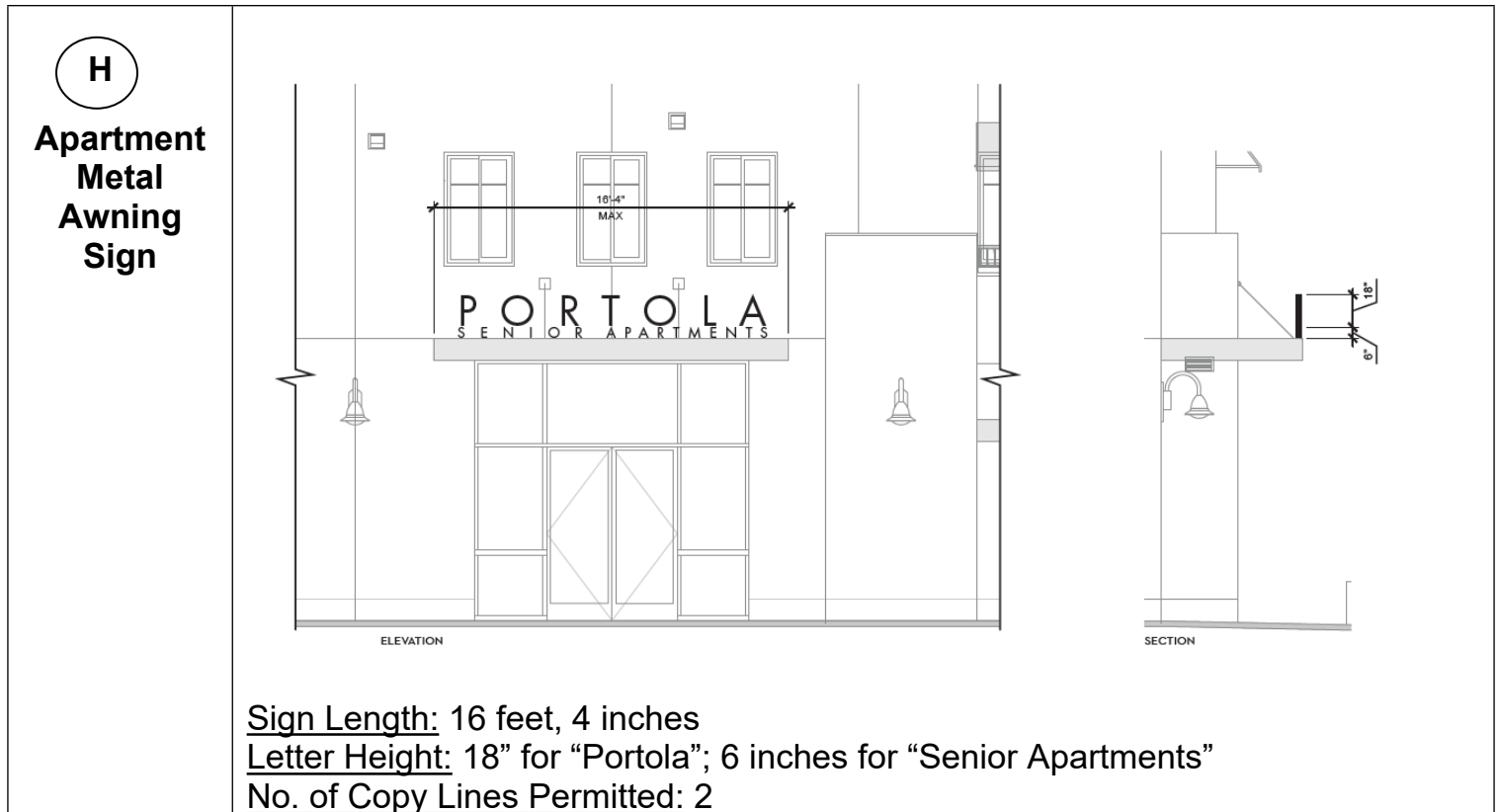
2A



2B

Letter Height: 3 inches; only one copy line permitted.

	<p><u>Maximum size:</u> 1 square foot per 1 lineal foot of tenant space, up to 100 square feet.</p>
<p>F</p> <p>Tenant ID Metal Awning Sign (3 max., 2 for Suite A, 1 for Suite B)</p>	 <p><u>Sign Length:</u> 14 feet, 8 inches <u>Letter Height:</u> 18 inches maximum <u>No. of Copy Lines Permitted:</u> 1</p>
<p>G</p> <p>Building Numbers (901 Portola Oaks Drive – Commercial Address) (931 Portola Oaks Drive – Senior Apartments Address)</p>	 <p><u>Number Height:</u> 12 inches</p>



ANALYSIS:

Compliance with Zoning Code:

Pursuant to this City's Sign Code (Zoning Code Chapter 9.164), the proposed commercial/residential center requires Planning Commission approval of a Planned Sign Program (PSP) because it is a new development with three or more signs, lighting for purposes of signage, and for requested deviations to the regulations in the Sign Code. PSPs are regulated by Section 9.164.060 of the Lake Forest Municipal Code. The purpose of a Planned Sign Program is to assure coordination and compatibility between all signs within a commercial or industrial center, and to allow for flexibility through permitting exceptions from the general sign regulations. A sign program is intended to address sign placement, color, style, lighting, and sign materials and their consistency on the property.

The City's Sign Code Section 9.164.110 includes regulations for all nonresidential permanent signs. Table 2 is a summary of the regulations in the Sign Code and the proposed signage in the PSP. The request for deviations is in bold type in the "Proposal" column.

TABLE 2 - SIGN CODE COMPLIANCE

	Sign Code Requirement	Proposal
Tenant Wall Signs for Freestanding Buildings Within a Center		
Maximum No. Permitted	1/tenant per elevation	Up to 11 maximum as follows: <u>Front (North) Elevation:</u> 1 on each suite B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L
Maximum size	1 square foot per 1 lineal foot of tenant space, up to 200 square feet	1 square foot per 1 lineal foot of tenant space, up to 100 square feet
Maximum Letter Height	0-49 lineal feet: 24 in. 50-99 lineal feet: 36 in. 100 lineal feet or more: 48 in.	18 in. max. for single line (2 lines of text permitted but subject to an overall 24 inch max.
Awning Signage		
Maximum No. Permitted	1 per building elevation	Up to 8 as follows: <u>Front (North) Elevation</u> Up to 4 awnings: 1 each on suites F, G, H, I <u>Side (East) Elevation</u> 2 awnings: 1 on suite A, 1 on suite B, and <u>Rear (South Elevation)</u> 2 awnings: 1 on suite A, and 1 at the apartment complex entrance.
Maximum size	1 square foot per 1 lineal foot of tenant space, up to 200 square feet	1 square foot per 1 lineal foot of tenant space, up to 100 square feet when tenant occupies more than 1 suite
Maximum Letter Height	24 inches	18 inches maximum
No. of copy lines permitted	N/A	2

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Vehicle Directional Signs		
Maximum Size	20 square feet	16 square feet
Maximum Height	4 feet	4 feet
Location	Within landscaped planters Not within 100 feet of any other monument sign	Within landscaped planters Not within 100 feet of any other monument sign
Monument Signs		
Number of monument signs allowed	1 sign per 1,000 linear feet of frontage; maximum of 4 signs	1 monument sign only
Distance requirement between two monument signs	Not within 100 feet of any other monument sign, except when flanking a main shopping center entrance.	N/A
Maximum Sign Height	7 feet	11 feet
Maximum Sign Size	120 square feet	104 square feet
Number of Tenants	4	1

Deviations from the Sign Code

Pursuant to the City's Sign Code, the purpose of a Planned Sign Program is to allow for flexibility from the general sign requirements in exchange for the benefits of having a coordinated signage program for the development. As shown in Table 2 above, the proposed Planned Sign Program deviates from two regulations: 1) the maximum number of awning signs and 2) the maximum sign height for a monument sign (see bold text in Table 2, above).

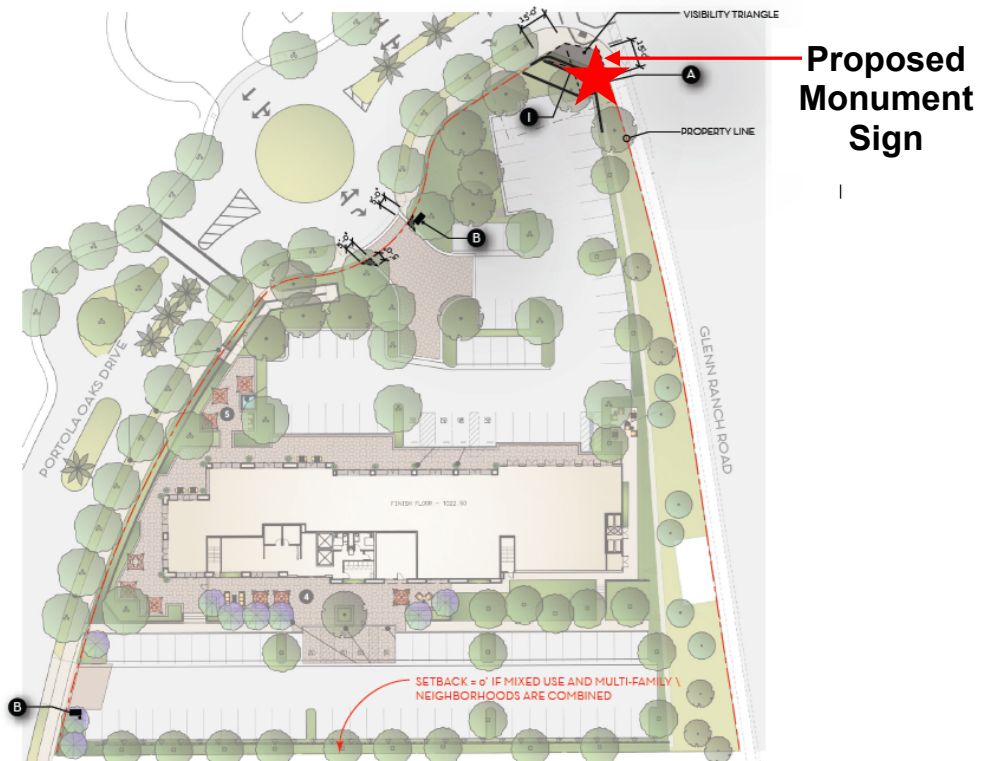
Awning Signs

1. The first requested deviation is to increase the number of awning signs permitted from the code maximum of one per building elevation, to allow up to eight including:
 - a. up to four on the front (north facing) building elevation on suites F, G, H, and I;
 - b. two on the side (east facing) building elevation: one on Suite B, and one on Suite A; and
 - c. two on the rear (south facing) building elevation: one on Suite A, and one above the apartment complex entrance.

The sign code indicates that only one awning sign for a single building is permitted and it did not anticipate a multi-tenant building such as the one proposed. Staff is supportive of this deviation, because the letter height is limited to 18 inches and adding awning signs above the suite entrances adds to the pedestrian scale. Awnings add color and character to the building and provide architectural interest to the building which is designed in the Spanish architectural vernacular.

Monument Sign

2. The second deviation request is related to the height of the monument sign proposed at the southwest corner of Portola Oaks Drive and Saddleback Ranch Road. The applicant is requesting an additional 4 feet in height for a total of 11 feet. Staff is supportive of this deviation for the following reasons:
 - The monument sign is located adjacent to primary arterial streets (Saddleback Ranch Road and Portola Oaks Drive).



- There is an existing traffic signal that partially obstructs the view of the monument sign for drivers and pedestrians. Raising the monument sign to 11 feet facilitates its visibility, see Exhibit 1, below.

Exhibit 1

- Increasing the height of the monument sign will make the sign more visible, and therefore, safer for drivers and visitors to see and enter the commercial center and senior apartments.
- The monument sign is well designed and utilizes an existing decorative wall without obstructing the existing “IronRidge” sign.
- The proposed sign, as designed, does not appear bulky and is in scale with the surrounding landscaped area.
- Accordingly, the deviations from the sign code for the monument sign will ensure that the location of the retail commercial center and senior apartments in Portola Hills is visible to the community.

Aesthetic Impacts of Signs and Compliance with Design Guidelines

The Portola mixed-use building is located in Portola Center and is subject to the Portola Center Area Plan, specifically, Section 7.9 “Community Signage and Advertising Guidelines”. The Guidelines indicate signage within Portola Center shall be governed by the City of Lake Forest Sign Code. The Guidelines also indicate that retail signage should be oriented to the pedestrian and that awnings and window signs are encouraged to provide a variety of visuals within the mixed-use center. The Guidelines indicate that letter sizes should not exceed twelve

inches, but this is not a Code requirement, only a guideline. The Planned Sign Program allows for letter sizes to be 12 to 18 inches high whereas the Sign Code limits letter sizes to 24 inches. Therefore, the 18-inch letter sizes permitted by the PSP meet Code and the awning signs and tenant wall signs meet the intent of the Guidelines to be pedestrian oriented and provide visual variety that enhances the building.

The proposed signage is in compliance with these guidelines in that all proposed wall signage is appropriately placed within the architecture of the building. Furthermore, the size and number of the proposed monument signs (three total) have been designed to match the materials and colors of the Spanish architectural building style. Furthermore, all signs will either be internally illuminated or backlit, and they will be controlled by a timer and turned off at 10:00 p.m. which will minimize lighting impacts onto the surrounding neighborhoods. The lighting being turned off at 10:00 p.m. is consistent with lighting at the adjacent Portola Community Park being turned off at 10:00 p.m. Condition 4 has been added to the Resolution (Attachment 1) indicating that signage lighting shall be turned off at 10:00 p.m. or until such time as the park lighting at Portola Community Park is turned off, whichever is more restrictive. Exhibit 2, below, illustrates how lighting from both the Mixed-Use building and adjacent Portola Community Park will appear at night prior to park lights and signage lights being turned off at 10:00 p.m. (pages 5, and 11 of the PSP illustrate nighttime views. As such, all the signage on site is compatible with the architecture of the mixed-use building and its surroundings. Accordingly, the proposed PSP is consistent with the Portola Center Area Plan and will not negatively impact the aesthetics of the site or surrounding areas.

Exhibit 2 – Nighttime views of the Portola Mixed-Use Building
and Portola Community Park

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions, the proposed project is exempt under Section 15311(a), an exemption for on-site signage.

PUBLIC NOTICING:

In accordance with the requirements of Section 9.184.040(C)(2) of the Municipal Code of the City of Lake Forest, this project has been noticed in a newspaper of general circulation on July 20, 2023. In addition, on July 20, 2023, public notices were posted at City Hall and sent to owners of all property within 300 feet of the project boundary.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Planned Sign Program