

PROPOSAL:	The applicant is requesting to place one freestanding, monument and business complex sign at the La Center School District High School along Highland Avenue. The sign face area would be approximately 47.29 square feet (SF).
LOCATION:	725 NE Highland Avenue. The sign would be located at the entrance of La Center High School at the intersection of Highland Avenue and the private access road that provides direct access to the high school. Sign would be located on the southwest corner of the intersection.
APPLICANT:	Josh Soske, 725 NE Highland Road, La Center, WA. Email: josh@idandr.com. Phone: 866-597-6753.
ZONING:	Urban Public (UP)
APPROVAL CRITERIA:	The City reviewed the application for compliance with the La Center Municipal Code (LCMC) Chapter 8.60, Sign Regulations.
Submittal Date:	February 15, 2023
SEPA:	This project is categorically exempt per WAC 197-11-800(2)(c).
DECISION:	Approval subject to conditions.
DECISION DATE:	March 14, 2023
CITY REVIEWER:	Ethan Spoo, AICP, Consulting Planner and Tony Cooper, PE, City Engineer

#### **CONTACT LIST**

#### OWNER

La Center School District 725 NE Highland Road La Center, WA 98629

#### APPLICANT

Josh Soske La Center School District 725 NE Highland Road La Center, WA 98629 360-907-4668

#### SIGN INSTALLER

Esco Pacific Signs 627 NW Middle St. Chehalis, WA 98532 360-748-6461

#### LA CENTER STAFF

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# **Overview and Procedural Background**

The applicant is proposing to place one freestanding, monument and business complex sign at the entrance of the La Center School District High School. The sign would be placed on the southwest corner of the intersection between Highland Avenue and the private access road that provides direct access to La Center High School. The total sign face area is approximately 47.29 SF and upheld by either concrete split faced, polished Concrete Masonry Units (CMU) walls, or split faced garden wall blocks. The applicant's plans for the sign are included in Attachment A.

# Approval Criteria

## LCMC 8.60.030

(4) Approval Criteria. The department shall approve a sign permit where the applicant demonstrates compliance with all of the following approval criteria:

- (a) The proposed sign is not one prohibited under LCMC 8.60.020(2)(a) through (k), Prohibited Signs; and
- (b) The proposed sign complies with all applicable dimensional, durational, locational and other requirements of this chapter.

#### Finding(s):

- The applicant is proposing a monument sign, a permitted freestanding sign listed under LCMC 8.60.050. The sign is not a prohibited type under 8.60.020(a) through (k).
- The sign complies with the applicable dimensional, durational, locational and other requirements of this chapter, as demonstrated in materials submitted by the applicant and documented in this staff report.
- Conclusion: The proposed sign meets the approval criteria for the City to issue a sign permit as further detailed in this staff report.

## LCMC 8.60.050 General Requirements Applicable to All Signs

(1) General Requirements. The following requirements apply to all signs allowed in the city:

- (a) Building and Specialty Code Compliance. All signs, whether regulated by this chapter or not, shall meet all applicable construction and operation standards of the International Building Code adopted by the city of La Center. Where these codes conflict with the requirements of this chapter, the more stringent or restrictive shall control.
- (b) No sign shall be insecurely erected, or constructed so as to constitute a safety hazard, fire hazard or a nuisance.
- (c) Sign Obstructing View, Passage or Safety. No sign shall:
  - *i.* Obstruct free ingress to or egress from any door, window, fire escape, alley, driveway, fire lane, access from the sidewalk to transit stop areas, designated disabled parking spaces, disabled access ramps or building exits;
  - *ii.* Be located so as to obstruct or interfere with intersection sight distance for vehicles exiting a driveway or street in accordance with the line of sight triangle requirements in the La Center engineering standards;
  - *iii.* Obstruct or interfere in any way with the public's ability to clearly view government signs;
  - *iv.* By reason of their size, location, movement, content, coloring, or manner of illumination be subject to being confused with a government sign; or
  - v. Interfere in any way with traffic, visibility or passage within the public right-of-way, including vehicle travel lanes, sidewalks and bike lanes.
- (e) Lighting. Signs, excluding temporary signs and canopy signs, may be lit, either from within the sign structure or by external lights shining on the sign face. External light sources shall be aimed

#### City of La Center, Washington

downward and be shielded to direct light solely on the sign face, and in no case shall sign lights shine directly onto an adjacent property, buildings or the public right-of-way or cast glare into the eyes of pedestrians or motorists in the public right-of-way. Flashing, strobe and rotating lights are prohibited in all situations. Sign lights shall not substitute for security or safety lighting that may otherwise be required.

(f) Property Owner Consent. No sign shall be erected on property or a structure (e.g., a building or utility pole) owned by someone other than the person responsible for the sign without the express consent of the property's owner. If the city cannot verify owner consent, the sign will be deemed unlawful and subject to removal.

#### Finding(s):

- Compliance with the International Building Code is required before sign construction begins. As proposed, the business complex sign would be supported by a monument base constructed of either concrete split faced, polished Concrete Masonry Units (CMU) walls, or split faced garden wall blocks. Therefore, the sign will be securely constructed and will not be a safety or fire hazard. As a condition of approval, the applicant shall obtain a building permit prior to sign placement.
- The proposed sign would be located at the La Center High School on publicly owned property. Ingress and egress to the subject site is available off of Highland Avenue and the sign will not obstruct this access. The sign would not obstruct free ingress or egress from doors, windows, fire escapes, alleys, driveways, fire lanes, from the sidewalk to transit stops or disabled parking or access ramps or building exits.
- The City Engineer has verified that the sign will not interfere with vision clearance or intersection sight distance, as depicted on the attached site plan prepared by the applicant.
- The sign will be exactly 7.42 feet tall from finished grade and will not obstruct or interfere with the public's ability to clearly view government signs. Government signs in proximity to the site are road signs, which are metal panels mounted on poles of at least six feet in height. Furthermore, the sign would not by reason of its size, location, movement, content, coloring, or manner of illumination be subject to being confused with a government sign or interfere in any way with traffic, visibility or passage with the public right-of-way, including vehicle travel lanes, sidewalks and bike lanes.
- The applicant stated the electronic reader board portion of the sign will be illuminated from within the structure with LED lighting.
- The authorized applicant, Josh Soske, and the property owner, La Center School District, signed the permit application.
- Conclusion: As conditioned, the above requirements are met
- (i) Freestanding Signs. When a freestanding sign is allowed by this chapter, Figures 8.60.050(1) through 8.60.050(5) illustrate the five allowed freestanding sign configurations: monument, single and dual pedestal, and single and dual pylon. The signs shall comply with the dimensional standards specified in these figures and the area and height requirements specified in this chapter.
- (j) Freestanding Sign Base Material. The sign base and support structure of freestanding signs must be constructed of or covered with quality materials such as real or faux stone, brick, stucco, textured wood, tile, and textured concrete.
- (k) Freestanding Sign Landscaping. All freestanding signs shall have landscaping surrounding the base of the sign equal in area to a minimum of 80 percent of the sign face area. Landscaping shall consist of grass, low shrubbery, and/or ground cover. Whenever possible and appropriate, native vegetation that is drought resistant and requires minimal or low maintenance shall be used for sign-related landscaping. Landscaping shall be well maintained. Sign-related landscaping may be included in any calculation of total landscaping required in a zoning district.

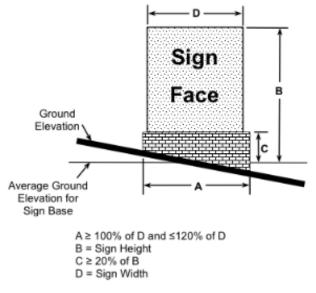


Figure 8.60.050(1) Monument Sign Dimensional Standards

#### Finding(s):

- The sign would be a freestanding, monument and business complex sign. The sign's base would be at least 9 feet wide, which is equal to 100% of the sign's display area width. The sign's base is also elevated 2.17 feet above grade, which is greater than 20% of the total sign height (7.42 feet). Lastly, the width of the sign's base is greater than or equal to the sign face width and less than or equal to 120% of sign's display area width (9.42 feet). Therefore, the dimensional requirements for monument signs shown in Figure 8.60.050(1) are met.
- The sign supports would either be concrete split faced, polished Concrete Masonry Units (CMU) walls, or split faced garden wall blocks. Staff find that materials proposed by the applicant are textured concrete that meets the code provision.
- The base of the sign is required to be landscaped, which must include grass, low shrubbery, and/or ground cover with native vegetation and drought resistant varieties preferred. Given the face area is 47.29 SF, the landscaping must be at least 42.7 SF and placed at the base of the sign. The sign will be placed in an area of existing grass landscaping which meets the landscaping requirement.
- Conclusion: the sign meets the dimensional, material, and landscaping requirements, subject to conditions.
- (o) Electronic Reader Board. An electronic reader board is not a separately allowed sign. Where they are allowed they may be integrated within an allowed freestanding sign. An electronic reader board shall comply with each of the following requirements:
  - i. The display area shall not exceed 30 square feet or as otherwise limited by an allowed sign area.
  - ii. Maximum luminance shall not exceed 100 nits during nighttime hours and 5,000 nits during daylight hours. The applicant shall provide certified data verifying compliance with these luminance requirements.
  - iii. The display shall have automated control of sign luminance based on current ambient lighting conditions.
  - iv. Electronic reader boards shall only be on during business hours.
  - v. Minimum hold between messages shall not be less than four seconds.
  - vi. No motion shall be allowed except for instantaneous change of message.
  - vii. Electronic reader boards shall not be located in wetland, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, or frequently flooded critical areas or their associated buffers.

#### Finding(s):

- The active display area of the LED display is approximately 28 SF, which is less than 30 SF.
- Maximum luminance cannot exceed 100 nits during nighttime hours and 5,000 nits during daylight hours. The applicant did not provide information on the proposed luminance of the electronic reader board, automated controls based on ambient lighting, hours of operation, minimum hold between messages, or motion.
- The electronic reader board is not located in wetland, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, or frequently flooded critical areas or their associated buffers.
- As a condition of approval, the applicant shall limit the sign luminance to 100 nits at nighttime, 5,000 nits during the day.
- As a condition of approval, the sign shall have automated controls for luminance and ambient lighting conditions;
- As a condition of approval, the sign shall only be on during business hours, shall have a minimum hold of four seconds between messages, and shall not have motion.
- As a condition of approval, the applicant shall construct the electronic reader board using the approved plans shown in Attachment A.
- Conclusion: As conditioned, the above requirements are met.

## Signs in the UP (urban public) zone

(1) All signs in the UP zone shall comply with the requirements of this section and the requirements of LCMC <u>8.60.050</u>, General requirements applicable to all signs, unless otherwise allowed in this section
(2) Total sign coverage allocated to each public entity shall not exceed one square foot per one linear foot of building frontage, per abutting street frontage, with an allowable minimum of 36 square feet and a maximum of 120 square feet per public entity. The maximum sign area may be distributed among any of the following signs:

(d) Business Complex Sign. A business complex sign shall not exceed 80 square feet in area and eight feet in height. One complex sign may be installed on any one street frontage.

(4) Electronic reader boards and digital video displays are allowed in the urban public zone if they are owned and operated by a public agency. Private electronic reader boards or digital video displays are not allowed in the urban public zone.

#### Finding(s):

- The proposed sign complies with the general requirements in LCMC 8.60.050 as demonstrated in this staff report.
- The sign is located in the Urban Public zone visible from Highland Avenue. The high school is
  permitted one square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage. The high school as
  225 feet of building frontage facing Highland Road and would be allowed up to 120 SF of total
  sign area across the property. The only other sign on the property is the existing wall panel sign
  that the applicant is removing and replacing with the proposed monument sign. The proposed
  sign would be 47.29 SF, less than the allowed maximum for the property.
- Urban Public zones are allowed to have one business complex sign, and in this case, placed at the entrance of the La Center School District Complex. The sign face area must be less than 80 SF and the total sign's height must be equal to or less than 8 feet tall to meet the zoning requirements. The sign face area, as defined by LCMC 8.60.150, is approximately 47.29 SF, which is less than 80 SF. The sign is proposed to be approximately 7.42 feet tall above finished grade. Therefore, this criterion is met.
- The applicant is proposing an illuminated sign that is specifically allowed under LCMC 8.60.050

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(e).

- The property owner, La Center School District, as defined by LCMC 8.60.150, is a public agency that will own and operate the sign.
- Conclusion: The requirements of this section are met.

# **CONCLUSIONS & DECISION**

The review authority finds the applicant has sustained the burden of proving the application complies with the applicable provisions of La Center's Municipal Code. Therefore, the subject application is hereby APPROVED subject to the following conditions of approval:

- 1. The applicant shall obtain a building permit prior to sign placement.
- 2. The applicant shall limit the sign luminance to 100 nits at nighttime, 5,000 nits during the day.
- 3. The sign shall have automated controls for luminance and ambient lighting conditions.
- 4. The sign shall only be on during business hours, shall have a minimum hold of four seconds between messages, and shall not have motion.
- 5. The applicant shall construct the sign using the approved plans shown in Attachment A.

## APPEALS

Decisions on sign permits are appealable to the City Council per 8.60.030(2)(d).

Bryan Kast, P.E. **Public Works Director** 

Anthony Cooper, PE

**City Engineer** 

## Attachments

Attachment A: Sign permit application materials

# Attachment A

La Center School District Highland Avenue sign installation permit amendment 2/14/23

District Complex Public Monument Sign

8.60 Sign Regulations

In order to eliminate the permitting challenges with wall mounting the new sign at the high school we will install it as a public monument sign for the complex along Highland Avenue.

This is a new sign requiring a permit but does not need a variance as it complies with LCMC 8.60 as listed below:

The sign will be located in an urban public (UP) zone. LCMC 8.60.110

The sign is less than 120 sqft (2)

The sign is less than 80 sqft (2) (d)

The sign is less than 8' in height from the average grade (2) (d)

La Center School District is a political subdivision of Washington State and a public agency (4) This work will be done under LCMC 8.60.050 (1) - General Requirements:

Does not interfere with sight triangle requirements (c) (ii)

Highland Avenue has a posted speed limit of 25 mph

Lit from within the sign structure (e)

Monument sign (i)

Dimension A is >= to dimension D 113"

Dimension C (21") is >= 20% of dimension B (20% of 7'11" is 19")

Monument base is concrete split faced or polished CMU, or split faced garden wall blocks (j) Lawn landscaping will remain unchanged around sign (k)

Reader board portion (o)

Display area is less than 30 sqft (i) (37.44" x 109.19" is 28.4 square feet)

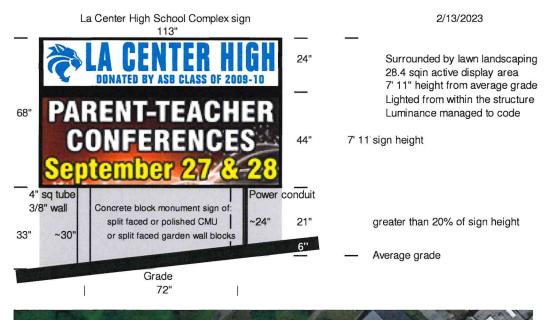
Luminance and images managed to comply with the code by the operating system (ii-vi)



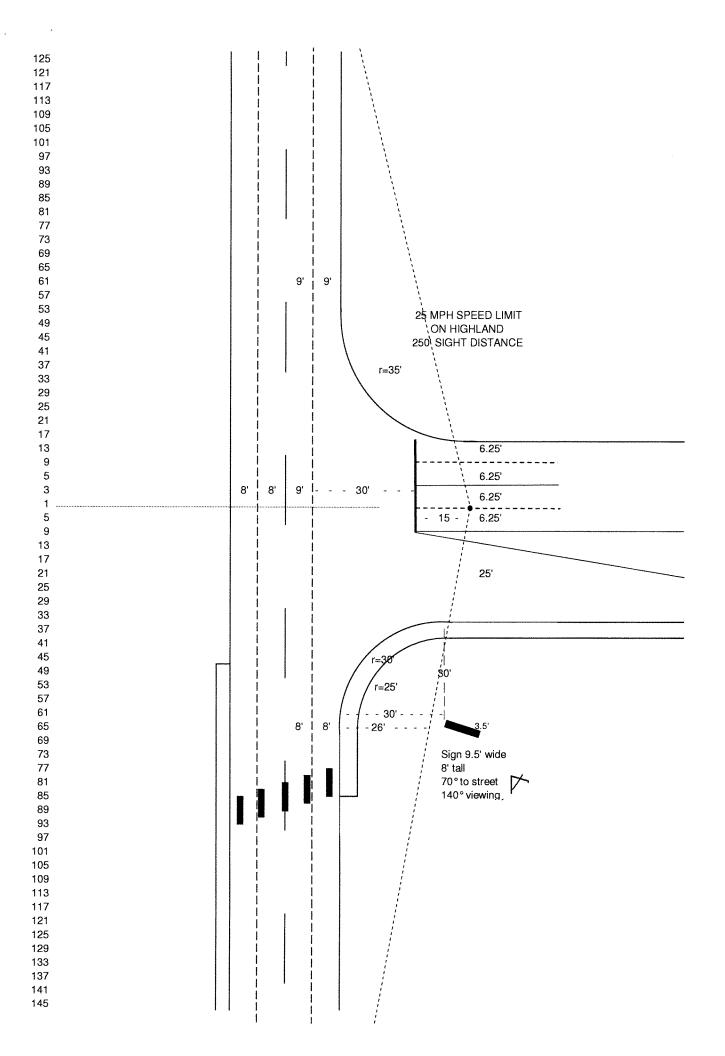
We would like to amend our current application with the City to implement this public monument sign for the La Center School District complex along Highland Avenue. Please let us know of any other information you may need.

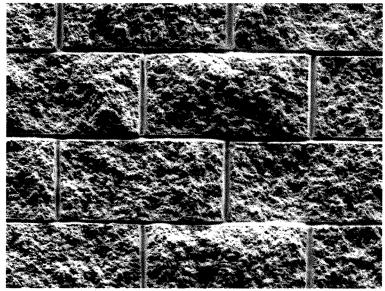
Thank you,

Josh Soske 866-597-6753

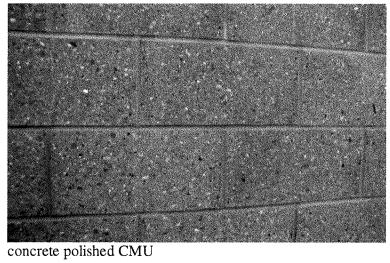


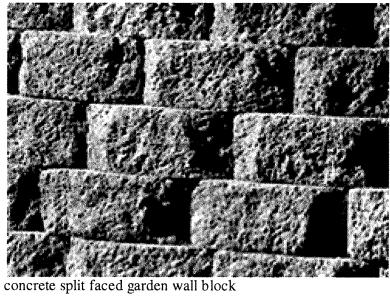






concrete split faced CMU







- Overall Dimensions 5.67' high x 9.42' wide
- ID Panel (Backlit) 2' high x 9.42' wide
- LED Display GS6-60x175-15.85-RGB 3.67' high x 9.42' wide

PRODUCTION READY ARTWORK NEEDED FOR:

#### 09/30/2021 (REV 0) Concept La Center HS\_WA Entrance GS6-60x175-15\_85 (1)



# LA CENTER HIGH SCHOOL LA CENTER, WA

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