



Development Services

520-432-9300
developmentservices@cochise.az.gov
www.cochise.az.gov
1415 Melody Ln, Bdg F
Bisbee, Arizona 85603

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission
FROM: Matthew Taylor, AICP, Planning Manager
FOR: Christine McLachlan, AICP, Director
SUBJECT: SU25-17 (Billboard (Hwy 90/Pine St))
DATE: August 13, 2025

Docket SU25-17 (Hwy 90/Pine St Billboard)

A Special Use Authorization request to allow a billboard. Section 2.54 of the Zoning Regulations (*Signs*) identifies billboards as a principal use, consisting of a free-standing off-site permanent sign with a face area of 300 square feet or more. Billboards are allowed in Rural, General Business, Light Industry, and Heavy Industry districts.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES

Applicant: Summit Locations LLC
Location: Southeast Corner of Hwy 90 and Pine Street
APN: 106-16-030B
Property Size: 13.26 acres
Zoning: GB
Plan Designation: Enterprise
Growth Area: B – Community Growth Areas
Area Plan: Babocomari
Existing Use: Undeveloped
Proposed Use: Billboard

Surrounding Zoning and Uses

| | | |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| North | GB, MR-1, SR-12 | Commercial, Single Family Residential |
| South | GB | Undeveloped |
| East | R-36 | Undeveloped |
| West | RU-4 | Single Family Residence |

II. SITE HISTORY

- June 2025 – commercial permit application for billboard (#CP25-000077).
- No active code compliance actions

III. SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

The applicant requests a special use to allow a billboard totaling 45' in height above grade with an aggregate square footage of 1,152 square feet utilizing two 12'X24' panels per sign face. The applicant proposes waivers to increase allowed height, reduce minimum setbacks, and use uplighting.

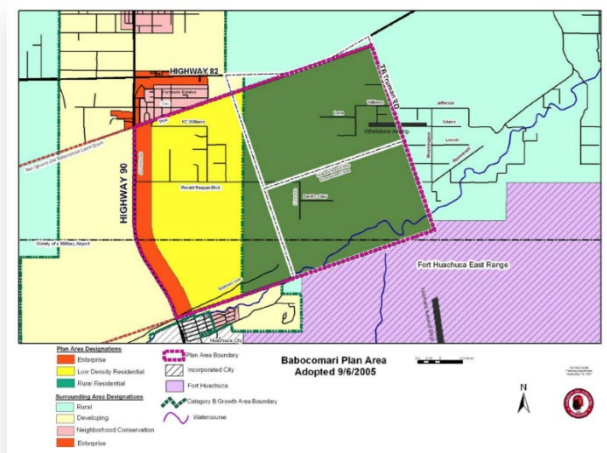
IV. ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS – COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIAL USE FACTORS

Section 2.48.160 of the Zoning Regulations identifies ten (10) factors to evaluate Special Use applications. These factors determine the suitability of a special use request, whether to recommend approval, and to determine if conditions and/or modifications are needed to mitigate potentially negative impacts on surrounding properties. With the information provided, five (5) factors apply to this special use request with five (5) complying with conditions:

1. Compliance with Duly Adopted Plans: Partially Complies

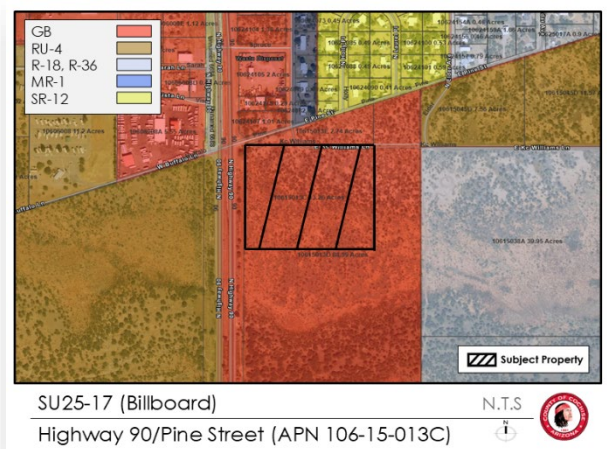
The property is designated *Enterprise* and *Category B (Community Growth Areas)* by the Comprehensive Plan, and the property’s GB zoning is consistent with both Plan designations. The property is also within the Babocomari Area Plan which designates the property as *Enterprise*.

Enterprise is characterized by an established pattern of commercial and/or industrial land uses. The subject property has an established principal use that has been in existence since the early 2000’s (self-storage) and is adjacent to undeveloped properties also zoned GB. Nearest residences are located to the east and south with the closest residence about 800’ to the southeast at Camino de Tundra and Calle Segundo. Allowing a billboard on the property as a second principal or accessory use is not contradictory to current Plan designations. The Babocomari Plan recommends light pollution control measures and limitations on outdoor lighting to reduce impacts on military activities utilizing the Hubbard Assault Strip Encroachment Area and limiting glare impacts on areas designated Low Density Residential.



2. Compliance with the Zoning District Purpose: Complies

The General Business zoning district is intended to allow non-residential uses such as offices, retail stores, service establishments, and wholesale and distribution uses when directly accessing major roadways. The purpose is to promote non-residential development and although GB allows single and multi-household residential uses these uses are not intended to result in a residential site. Billboards are not identified as a permitted use or a use requiring a special use in Section 2.33 (*General Business Zoning District*) of the Zoning Regulations; however, billboards are identified as an allowed use with special use approval in Section 2.54 (*Signs*). GB is an appropriate zoning district for a variety of signs, including permanent off-



premise signage, but due to size, height, lighting, and other attributes are not necessarily appropriate in areas with an established residential development pattern even if the siting property itself has direct access to a major roadway.

3. Development Along Major Streets: Not Applicable

The subject property is located at the southeast corner of Highway 90 and Pine Street without established access. Future access may be from KC Williams Lane or Highway 90 where review and permitting falls under Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) jurisdiction. The purpose of this factor is to limit direct access to major roadways through the use of frontage roads, shared access, and no access easements, minimizing the creation of unsafe traffic conflicts and congestion.

4. Traffic Circulation: Not Applicable

After construction, the proposed special use will not generate traffic beyond occasional copy updates or maintenance since the billboard itself will not generate employee or customer traffic. The purpose of this factor is to ensure traffic increases are not contradictory to existing roadway classifications, utilize residential streets for non-residential traffic, or require right-of-way dedications or off-site improvements.

5. Adequate Services and Infrastructure: Not Applicable

The proposed billboard does not require additional services or infrastructure beyond energizing the sign to illuminate static copy (the site has existing power service).

6. Significant Site Development Standards: Does not Comply

Section 2.33 (*General Business Zoning District*) of the Zoning Regulations identifies applicable development standards for properties zoned GB and Section 2.51 (*Site Development Standards*) identifies additional requirements based on growth area category, such as parking/loading, screening, and landscaping. However, development standards specific to billboards are identified in Section 2.54.080.2 (*Signs*) of the Zoning Regulations and include standards relative to height, panel and aggregate area, minimum distances from other signs and structures, and setbacks. Noncomplying standards are included in the table below in bold.

| <u>STANDARD</u> | <u>2.54 (SIGNS)</u> | <u>ACTUAL</u> |
|--|--|---|
| Zoning Districts | RU, GB, LI, HI | GB |
| Structural Type | All | Steel |
| Maximum Area (Sign Face) | 600 square feet | 576 square feet (288 X 2) |
| Maximum Area (Aggregate) | 1,440 square feet | 1,152 square feet |
| The maximum aggregate sign area of two-square feet per lineal foot of street frontage. | | |
| Maximum Height | 35' | 45' |
| Illumination | Permitted (downlighting with shielding required) | Enclosed 100W LED Fixture (up lit) |
| Minimum Distance from other Billboards | 660' | >660' |
| Minimum Distance from other Ground Signs | 100' | >100' |
| Minimum Distance from any Structure | 100' | >100' |

| | | |
|--|------|---------|
| Minimum Distance from any Site Boundary | 100' | +/- 29' |
| The spacing distance shall be measured along the nearest edge of the right-of-way to a point directly opposite the sign. | | |

7. Public Input: Complies

Section 2.48.160 of the Zoning Regulations states, "If public concerns have been raised, it is fair to ask if the applicant has made a reasonable effort to address these concerns through the Citizen Review Process." The applicant mailed notices to property owners June 12, 2025, without response.

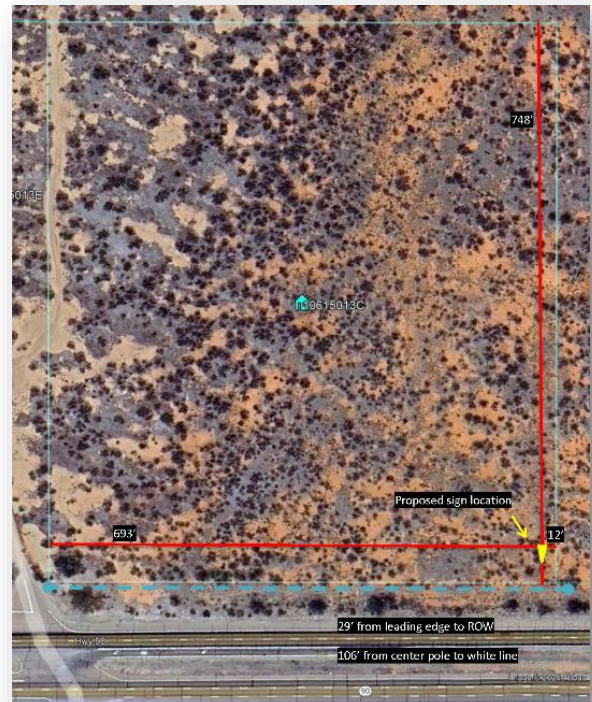
8. Hazardous Materials: Not Applicable

The billboard does not utilize hazardous materials.

9. Off-Site Impacts: Complies w/conditions

This factor is intended to ensure adequate measures have been taken to mitigate off-site impacts such as noise, outdoor lighting, odors, smoke, traffic, and dust:

- Noise: During construction – otherwise not applicable.
- Lighting: Outdoor lighting relative to brightness, fixture type, and shielding is subject to Section 2.54 of the zoning regulations. The applicant proposes enclosed sign fascia LED uplighting.
- Odors and Smoke: During construction – otherwise not applicable.
- Parking: During construction – otherwise not applicable.
- Landscaping: Staff recommends replenishing all native vegetation cleared for the billboard.
- Traffic: During construction – otherwise not applicable.
- Dust: During construction – otherwise not applicable.



10. Water Conservation: Not Applicable

County water conservation requirements apply to non-residential uses and properties, and Section 2.51.170 of the zoning regulations requires water saving strategies such as low-flow fixtures, and applicable water conservation regulations and policies identified in the zoning regulations and comprehensive plan are typically identified at permitting. Water conservation is not required as no habitable structures or uses increasing water consumption are proposed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff mailed notices to property owners within 750', published legal notice, and posted the property July 18-23, 2025.

VI. WAIVERS

Increase allowed height from 35' to 45', decrease setback from 100' to 29' along the west property line (Highway 90 frontage), and uplighting for sign fascia.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The applicant requests special use authorization approval to allow a billboard on a 13-acre parcel zoned GB. The property is currently undeveloped.



Factors in Favor of Approval

1. Five (5) factors do not apply
2. Complies with five (5) of five (5) applicable factors with conditions.
3. Support from a nearby property owner.

Factors Against Approval

1. Opposition from nearby property owners.
2. Visual and lighting impacts on established residential properties.
3. Staff is generally not supportive of development standard waivers.
4. Proposed lighting does not comply with Zoning Regulations.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the factors in favor of approval, staff recommends approval of Docket SU25-17 to allow a billboard subject to the following conditions:

1. Billboard shall comply with all applicable Zoning Regulation development standards, including Sections 2.45 (*Outdoor Lighting*) and 2.54 (*Signs*).
2. All vegetation cleared for the billboard shall be replenished.
3. Within 30-days of approval of the Special Use, the applicant shall provide the County a signed Acceptance of Conditions form and a Waiver of Claims form arising from ARS Section 12-1134. Prior to operation of the Special Use, the applicant shall apply for a building/use permit for the project within 12-months of approval. The building/use permit shall include a site plan in substantial conformance with the approved special use concept plan, the completed Special Use permit questionnaire and application, and appropriate fees. A permit must be issued within 12-months of the Special Use approval otherwise, the Special Use may be deemed void upon 30-day notification to the applicant.
4. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain any additional permits, or meet any additional Conditions, that may apply to the proposed use pursuant to other federal, state, or local laws or regulations.
5. Any changes to the approved Special Use will be considered a Modification to this Special Use and will require review and approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Sample Motion

I move to approve Docket SU25-17 with conditions recommended by staff, the factors in favor of approval constituting the findings of fact.
