



Community & Economic Development Division  
Planning and Development Services

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**To:** City of Scottsdale Residents & Businesses  
**From:** Andrew Chi, Planner  
**Email:** [achi@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:achi@scottsdaleaz.gov)  
**Date:** February 11, 2020, updated February 18, 2020  
**Re:** 4-TA-2019: Sign Ordinance Update – Freeway, Permanent & Temporary Signs

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This memorandum provides the residents and communities of the City of Scottsdale with information on steps the City of Scottsdale is taking to modify Article VIII. – Sign Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, amending the ordinance to introduce freeway-appropriate freestanding and building signs for large mixed-use developments along the Loop 101 Freeway between Scottsdale Road and Hayden Road (Case# 4-TA-2019). In-addition, minor updates and refinements to the existing ordinance are proposed pertaining to grammatical, spelling and formatting errors that were not addressed in the last Sign Ordinance update in 2017.

## **BACKGROUND**

During the past several years, there has been an increase in planned developments along the Loop 101 Freeway, with new vertical mixed-use developments, office and employment centers either planned or under construction. The current sign code does not adequately address or identify these types of new developments for adequate visibility along the Loop 101 Freeway, since historically, the sign code was written to accommodate signage for local streets and slower speeds, and the Loop 101 Freeway did not arrive in Scottsdale until the early 2000s.

The City recognized that new freeway-appropriate signage could be beneficial for all properties fronting the Loop 101 Freeway between Scottsdale Road and Hayden Road. Therefore, this proposal plans to update the sign requirements of the Zoning Ordinance to allow taller and larger freestanding signs along the freeway so that the signs can be easily and safely seen by drivers traveling along the freeway, and allow higher signage on buildings adjacent to the freeway. These changes will provide better on-site identification to help businesses, especially if the business does not have freeway frontage and therefore must rely on a freestanding sign to provide identification. At the same time, the goal is to maintain a stringent set of sign regulations and design requirements to continue to meet the General Plan’s requirement of a ‘strong sign code.’

On November 13, 2019, the Planning Commission initiated a text amendment (Attachment #1) to the Sign Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The primary objective of the text amendment initiation is to open up the Sign Ordinance and introduce new freestanding and building sign types to identify large mixed-use developments along the Loop 101 Freeway, so that the signs are easily seen by drivers traveling along the freeway. Presently, the current ordinance only allows freestanding signs that were designed to be seen from arterial and collector streets, and not from a freeway.

***NOTE:*** *The following outline is only a summary of the proposed ordinance and is subject to change based on public comments, comments from the Open Houses, and comments from the Planning Commission. A draft of the proposed ordinance will be published online and be available for feedback once this first round of public comment has concluded.*

## **PROPOSAL**

This amendment proposes to introduce three new sign types collectively called Freeway Zone Signs (Attachment #2):

- Freeway Pylon Sign
- Freeway Gateway Sign
- Freeway Building Sign

In order to utilize any Freeway Zone Sign types, the new ordinance will require the approval of a Community Sign District and a Comprehensive Sign Program by the Development Review Board through the public hearing process. The scope of the amendment will only allow Freeway Zone Signs for developments with Planned Regional Center (PRC) zoning and Planned Airpark Core Development (PCP) zoning in accordance with the Crossroads East PRC & PCP Zoning District Map (Attachment #3), with a district size no less than 25 acres. The focus area would only be along both sides of the Loop 101 Freeway between Scottsdale Road and Hayden Road (Attachment #4).

A *Freeway Pylon Sign* a freestanding sign structure that is detached from any building, is architecturally integrated with the project or building design, and intended to be placed near the Loop 101 Freeway.

- The proposed height will be measured from the freeway travel surface so that the height of the sign will rise and fall with the freeway grade.
- The maximum height measured from the freeway travel surface will be somewhere between 35 to 45 feet tall.
- The proposed maximum sign area will be 600 square feet per side.
- The maximum width shall not exceed 50% of the total height of the sign.
- Freeway Pylon Signs will be displayed on a lot abutting the freeway.
- The number of tenant names and/or development name may be up to 6.
- Limit one (1) freestanding Freeway Pylon Sign for a lot with a width of less than 500 feet, with one (1) additional Freeway Pylon Sign allowed for each additional 500 feet of lot width above 500 feet, not to exceed two (2) Freeway Pylon Signs per lot.
- All Freeway Pylon Signs shall be spaced no less than 500 to 1,000 feet from each other to prevent clutter, and no less than 600 feet from a residential district.
- All Freeway Pylon Signs shall be setback at least 150 feet from any street.
- All Freeway Pylon Signs shall be setback at least 200 feet from a Scenic Corridor designated roadway right-of-way line.
- Freeway Pylon Signs are prohibited within a Scenic Corridor designated roadway or within a Scenic Corridor Easement.
- The construction of any Freeway Pylon Signs shall only be allowed if the adjacent building is also under construction, so that no Freeway Pylon Signs will exist before any building.

A *Freeway Gateway Sign* is a freestanding sign structure that is shorter than a Freeway Pylon Sign, mounted on or within a base, detached from any building, architecturally integrated with the project

or building design, and is intended to be placed at the vehicular entrances into a development that is adjacent to the Loop 101 Freeway.

- The approximate height of the sign as measured from the adjacent grade will be somewhere between 20 to 25 feet tall.
- The proposed maximum sign area will be 300 square feet per side.
- The maximum width shall not exceed 50% of the total height of the sign.
- The number of tenant names and/or development name may be up to 6.
- Freeway Gateway Signs shall only be placed within 200 feet of the freeway or freeway frontage road right-of-way line and along an intersecting street.
- Limit one (1) freestanding Freeway Gateway Sign for a lot with a width of less than 500 feet, with one (1) additional Freeway Gateway Sign allowed for each additional 500 feet of lot width above 500 feet.
- Freeway Gateway Signs shall be separated from another Freeway Gateway Sign or another Freeway Pylon Sign on the same side of the freeway by a distance no less than 150 feet.
- Freeway Gateway Signs shall be setback 600 feet from a residential zoning district.
- Freeway Gateway Signs shall be setback at least 200 feet from a Scenic Corridor designated roadway right-of-way line.
- Freeway Gateway Signs are prohibited within a Scenic Corridor designated roadway or within a Scenic Corridor Easement.
- The construction of any Freeway Gateway Signs shall only be allowed if the adjacent building is also under construction, so that no Freeway Gateway Signs will exist before any building.

A *Freeway Building Sign* is a building wall sign that would be allowed on a building façade identifying the name of the building or any business within the building.

- Freeway Building Signs are allowed within 600 feet of the Loop 101 Freeway right-of-way line.
- Maximum area shall be one (1) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building front per story, not to exceed 300 square feet per sign.
- The maximum height of an individual character, cabinet or panel shall be 7 feet.
- Individual characters of a sign shall not be mounted on the front side of a raceway bar. Raceways shall be hidden from view, be integrated into a cabinet, screened by a panel, or used as the base for individual characters.
- No part of a Freeway Building Sign shall be placed a distance greater than 18 inches from the building facade or wall.
- No part of a Freeway Building Sign shall extend or project above a roof line or be displayed on any rooftop appurtenances.
- Freeway Building Signs are prohibited above 24 feet measured from adjacent grade if a building or a portion of a building is facing and within 600 feet of a residential zoning district.

All Freeway Pylon Signs and Freeway Gateway Signs shall be constructed utilizing high quality materials, textures, and colors that complement the architecture of the adjacent development project and the Sonoran Desert, and shall also adhere with the appropriate design guidelines, character area plans, and Sensitive Design Principles, as approved the Development Review Board. Identification and addressing on all signs shall utilize individual pan channel characters with face-illumination, individual reverse pan channel characters with halo-illumination, or aluminum routed copy with an acrylic background or push-thru plex with internal illumination, as approved by the Development Review Board.

In-addition to the introduction of new Freeway Zone Signs, minor updates to other portions of the Sign Ordinance *may* be addressed, including:

- Fixing grammatical, spelling and formatting errors for ease of use.
- Limiting the size of building signs to 8 square feet for residential uses such as individual dwellings, vacation rentals, short term rentals, and care homes to maintain residential character, and which was not addressed in the previous Sign Ordinance update.
- Allow building signs to be mounted above 36 feet and up to 60 feet in Commercial, Industrial and Mixed-Use Districts with Development Review Board approval, similar to what's already allowed in the Planned Regional Center (PRC) district and Planned Airpark Core Development (PCP) district.
- Limit the size of Monument Signs to 12 square feet in Service Residential (S-R) districts, which was not addressed in the previous Sign Ordinance update.
- Clarifying and distinguishing the two types of permanent window signs allowed.
- Incorporate additional design requirements for Suspended Canopy Signs.
- Modify the height allowances for Temporary Post-and-Panel Signs based on the street classification to improve traffic safety.

Current Planning Staff is taking this opportunity to obtain comments from residents and stakeholders to see if there is interest to follow through with these minor updates and refinements, or if a separate text amendment would be more appropriate.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The text amendment is currently in the public comment gathering stage. Public open house meetings have been scheduled for February 12, 2020, from 5:30pm-8:00pm at the Grayhawk Community Association Offices, 7940 E. Thompson Peak Parkway #102, Talon Room; and for February 20, 2020, from 5:30pm-8:00pm at the Granite Reef Senior Center, 1700 N. Granite Reef Road, Room 1.

Following the open house meetings, a draft ordinance would be produced and brought forward to the Planning Commission as a non-action item for feedback from the commissioners. The draft ordinance would then be revised for one more round of public comment, and then return back to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council, then to the City Council for possible final approval and adoption.

As this item progresses through the public hearing process, additional information will be available on the text amendment case information webpage and on the City's sign webpage:

<https://eservices.scottsdaleaz.gov/bldgresources/cases/details/50505>

<https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/codes/signs>

#### Attachments:

1. Planning Commission November 13, 2019 Text Amendment Initiation Report
2. Map of Possible Areas for Freeway Zone Signs
3. Crossroads East PRC & PCP Zoning Map
4. Visual Conceptual Examples of Freeway Pylon, Freeway Gateway, and Freeway Building Signs

# PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT



Meeting Date: November 13, 2019  
 General Plan Element: *Character and Design*  
 General Plan Goal: *Use community goals, character and context to determine development appropriateness.*

## **ACTION**

### **Sign Ordinance Update – Freeway, Permanent & Temporary Signs 779-PA-2019**

#### **Request to consider the following:**

1. Initiate a text amendment to the City of Scottsdale Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance No. 455) for the purposes of amending and updating the building sign, freestanding sign, and temporary sign regulations and related provisions for developments adjacent to the Loop 101 Freeway, and to refine and correct requirements and related provisions for permanent and temporary signs.

#### **Goal/Purpose of Request**

This is a request by the City of Scottsdale for a text amendment pertaining to the sign regulations for permanent signs, temporary signs, and related provisions for developments adjacent to the Loop 101 Freeway that are not currently addressed in the current Sign Ordinance. This request is also for minor corrections and refinements to sign requirements and related provisions for permanent and temporary signs that were not fully addressed in the previous Sign Ordinance updates that occurred in 2017. The goal is to establish more user-friendly and contemporary sign regulations while continuing to maintain strong sign controls as required by the General Plan and desired by the community.

## **OWNER**

City of Scottsdale  
480-312-7828

## **APPLICANT CONTACT**

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## LOCATION

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City-wide

## BACKGROUND

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On May 23, 2017, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4300, updating the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to temporary sign regulations to accommodate recent federal court decisions. On July 5, 2017, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4315, updating the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to permanent sign regulations and to adopt a more user-friendly and equitable sign code, removing land-use specific sign regulations and introduced zoning-based sign regulations. During the past several years, there has been an increase in planned developments along the Loop 101 Freeway, with new vertical mixed-use developments and employment centers either planned or under construction, which the current sign code does not adequately address since historically, the sign code was written to accommodate signage for local streets and slower speeds, and freeways did not arrive in Scottsdale until the early 2000s.

### Key Items for Consideration

- Consistency with the General Plan, as amended.
- Introduction of new sign types and sign regulations for developments along the freeway.
- Minor updates and refinements pertaining to permanent sign and temporary sign regulations; corrections to code formatting errors, and additional refinements to accommodate recent federal court decisions.

## APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

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There has been a recent increase in mixed-use and office developments along the Loop 101 Freeway between Scottsdale Road and Hayden Road. Included with these planned developments are major employment centers. The increase in freeway development has garnered an interest by the business community to request the City to update the sign requirements of the Zoning Ordinance to allow taller and larger freestanding signs along the freeway and allow higher signage on buildings adjacent to the freeway for large mixed-use developments.

In 2017, the City Council adopted two updates to the sign requirements of the Zoning Ordinance due to recent federal court decisions (i.e. Reed v. Gilbert) by removing content-based sign regulations, to create a more user-friendly and stronger sign code, and introduced zoning-based sign regulations. After two years of applying and practicing the updated code, there is a need to refine the existing code and conduct minor corrections to provisions and regulations related to permanent and temporary signs, and to correct formatting errors. The last code update did not completely eliminate content-based sign regulations to accommodate recent federal court decisions. Therefore, additional refinements are needed so that the code is less dependent on content-based sign regulations and completely embrace time, place and manner regulations to achieve a more equitable sign code. It is noted that this proposed text amendment excludes any updates to the scenic corridor sign requirements.

The modifications that will be proposed with this text amendment should enhance and maintain the City's character and aesthetics and be more reliable and useable for businesses and

employers relocating to Scottsdale. The goal is to maintain the General Plan and community's desire for strong sign control, an aesthetically attractive community to live and do business in, and to establish a more user-friendly and contemporary Zoning Ordinance. With the implementation of the proposed text amendment, all properties throughout the City would be subject to the updated sign requirements.

**Proposed Next Steps**

- Development of draft sign ordinance text
- Hold at least two community open house meetings
- Planning Commission Non-Action Meeting
- Planning Commission Hearing
- City Council Hearing

Staff estimates that the entire text amendment process will be completed in approximately five to seven months.

**IMPACT ANALYSIS**

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**Community Involvement**

This project will include standard community involvement consisting of public notice in the newspaper, online, postcard mailing to interested parties, and community outreach meetings. Residents, stakeholders, community organizations and individuals that participated in the last two sign code text amendments will be invited to participate in this text amendment.

**Community Impact**

This project is intended to update and reorganize regulations pertaining to permanent and temporary signs and introduce new sign types along freeways to better address the City's and business needs.

**OPTIONS & STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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**Recommended Approach:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission initiate the text amendment.

**RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT(S)**

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*Planning, Neighborhood and Transportation*  
Current Planning Services

**STAFF CONTACTS**

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Planner  
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**APPROVED BY**

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Andrew Chi, Planner, Report Author

10/24/19

Date



Tim Curtis, AICP, Current Planning Director  
480-312-4210, tcurtis@scottsdaleaz.gov

11/4/2019

Date

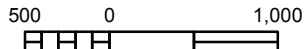
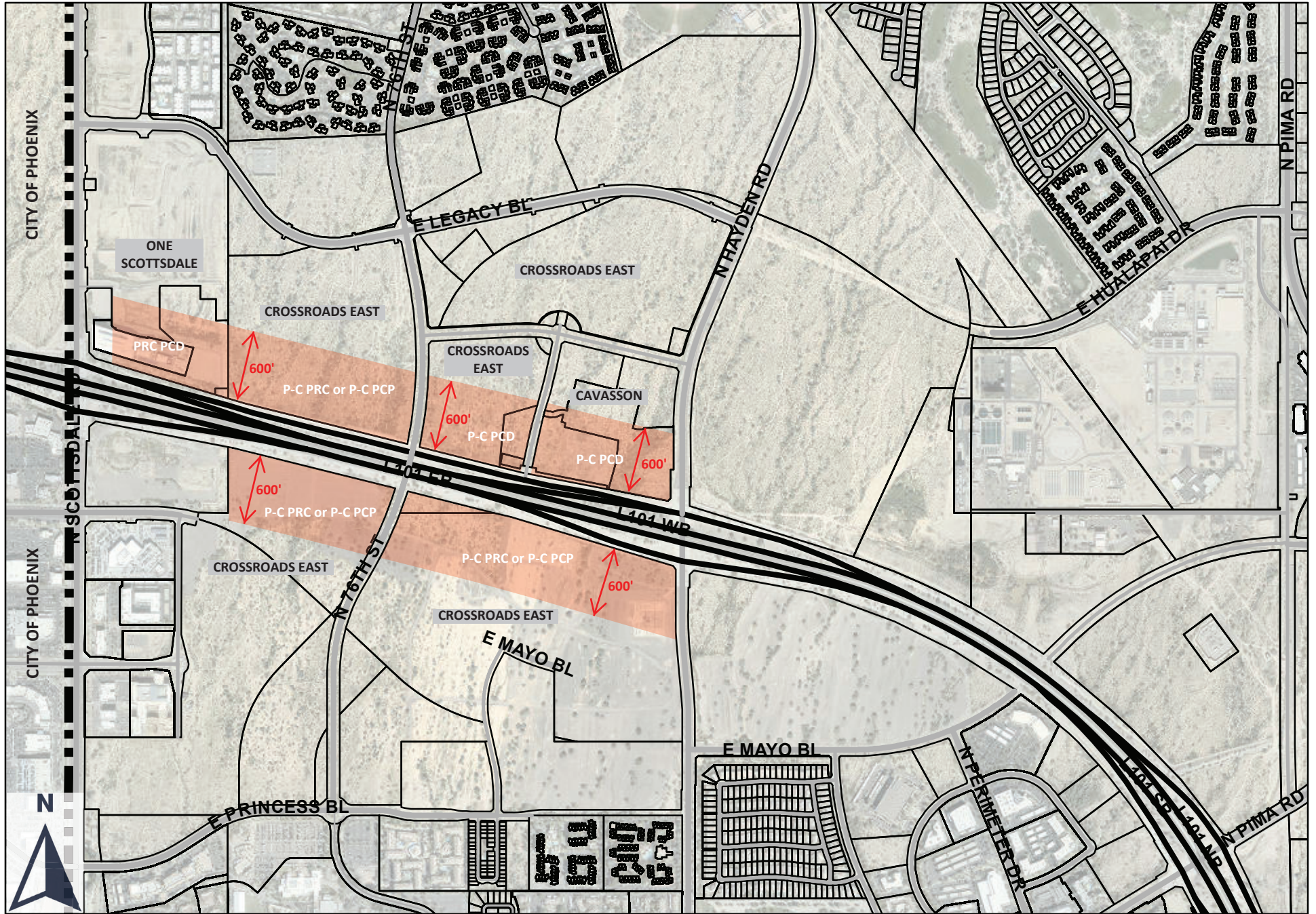
 FOR

Randy Grant, Administrator  
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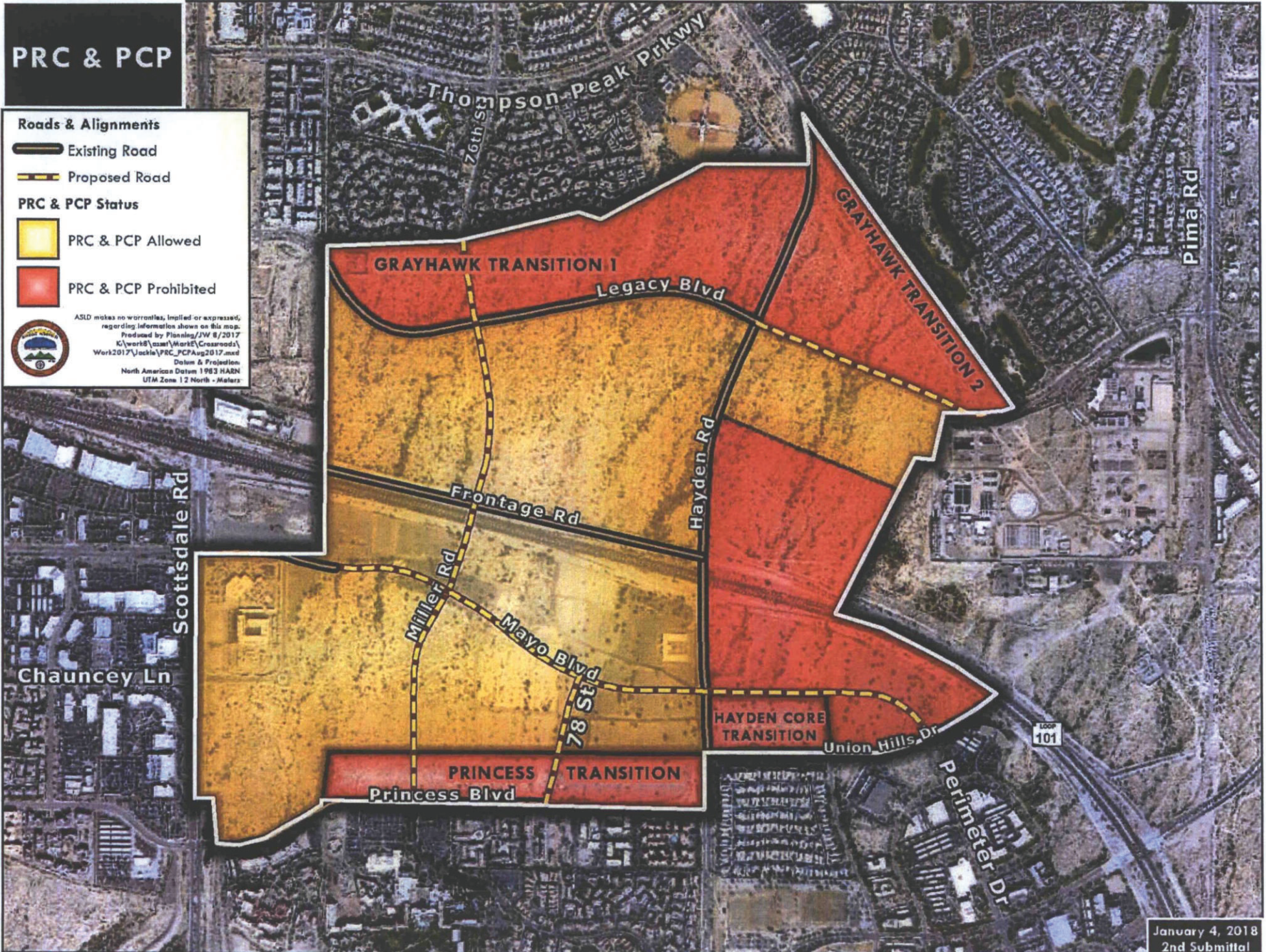
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**600' FREEWAY SIGN ZONE**



# PRC & PCP

**Roads & Alignments**

- Existing Road
- Proposed Road

**PRC & PCP Status**

- PRC & PCP Allowed
- PRC & PCP Prohibited

ASLD makes no warranties, implied or expressed, regarding information shown on this map.  
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