

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

February 4, 2026



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 3837 E Washington Avenue
Application Type: Signage Exception
UDC is an Approving Body
Legistar File ID #: [91533](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Chris Cronin, JNB Signs, Inc.

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the installation of a wall sign that is not adjacent to a parking lot or street, on the north elevation of the building, a non-qualifying elevation for signage.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The Sign Control Ordinance, [MGO Sec. 31.043\(3\)\(d\)](#) states that: *"After a public hearing as provided in Sec. 33.24(4)(e)3(d), the Urban Design Commission (UDC) may permit the use of wall signs on building façades not adjacent to off-street parking areas where, due to a variation of building setbacks, a signable area exists, provided the area of the sign shall not exceed the area of the wall sign permitted on the front of the building."*

Summary of Design Considerations

Project Site Location. The project site is generally located on the south side of E Washington Avenue, between Mendota Street and Lien Road. The project has been recently redeveloped for a carwash (Legistar File ID [86168](#)).

Existing Signage. As a new building, there is no existing signage on the building. While signage does not exist on the building today it is staff's understanding that additional wall signage will be located on the south elevation, as well as the east and west elevations. All signs will be code compliant and be located on qualifying elevations for signage.

Summary of Sign Code Requirements and Proposed Signage. Since the north elevation is not adjacent to an off-street parking area or street, signage is not allowed on this elevation. As noted above, UDC may grant an exception to this requirement provided that the signage shall not exceed the area of wall sign permitted on the qualifying elevation. In this case, the code would allow for an 80-square-foot wall sign on the E Washington Avenue elevation. At just under 37 square feet, the proposed sign is smaller than what the code would allow.

The proposed sign will be mounted at a height of just under 30 feet above grade.

The proposed sign design reflects a highly contoured cabinet to define the sign copy and logo, resulting in the appearance of individual channel lettering. The sign will be internally illuminated.

Summary of Staff Analysis. A signage exception to the Sign Code is required because the proposed sign is located on a non-qualifying elevation, not facing/abutting a street or parking area associated with the building.

Staff believe that the approval criteria, including those outlined in the Sign Code (MGO 31.043), have been met and are supportive of the proposed sign given that:

- The proposed wall sign is significantly smaller than what the code would allow on the street-facing elevation.
- As a highly contoured cabinet sign, the proposed sign is of a higher quality design aesthetic, reflecting individual channel lettering.
- Other sign types, including projecting signage and ground signage were explored, however given the site's relationship to the street, sitting much lower, the alternative sign types were not as visible.
- The proposed sign location provides business identification for those traveling west-bound on E Washington Avenue.