REQUEST FOR

Planning Commission Action



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DATE:

MAY 13, 2019

TITLE:

PUBLIC HEARING – FILED BY THE DISCOVERY SCIENCE CENTER FOR REGIONAL PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM NO. 2018-01 FOR THE DISCOVERY CUBE OF ORANGE COUNTY LOCATED AT 2500 NORTH MAIN STREET {STRATEGIC PLAN NO. 3, 2}

Prepared by Vince Fregoso

CONTRACTOR CONTRACTOR		12	
PLANNING	COMMISSION	SECRET	ARY

APPROVED ☐ As Recommended ☐ As Amended ☐ Set Public Hearing For	
DENIED ☐ Applicant's Request ☐ Staff Recommendation	
CONTINUED TO	

Planning Manager

Executive Director

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt a resolution approving Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01 as conditioned.

Request of the Applicant

Kellee Preston, representing the Discovery Science Center, dba Discovery Cube of Orange County, is requesting approval of a comprehensive regional planned sign program for the Discovery Cube (Cube) development pursuant to Section 41-885 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code (SAMC). Specifically, the applicant is requesting approval of a regional planned sign program that will allow a variety of wall (permanent and banners), directional and digital signs at the existing museum site.

Project Location and Site Description

The Discovery Science Center is located on the west side of Main Street just north of the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway. The Discovery Science Center, also known as the Discovery Cube, due to the landmark cube structure located at the southern section of the site, consists of a three-story, 110,000 square foot building and two surface parking lots with 303 parking spaces. Approximately 100,000 square feet of the building is dedicated to exhibit space, with the remainder including a 500-seat theater and administrative office space.

The project site is zoned Specific Development No. 65 (SD-65) and has a General Plan land use designation of Professional and Administrative Office (PAO). The proposed sign program is consistent with these designations. Surrounding land uses include motels, office buildings and the Main Place Mall to the north, the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway to the south; Santiago Park, office and single-family residential uses to the east, and a surface parking lot and the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway to the west.

Project Description

The applicant is proposing to install a variety of signs on the building, including temporary and permanent signs consisting of wall, directional and digital signs. These signs are intended to identify the Discovery Science Center and promote upcoming rotating and/or special exhibits. The proposed signage locations are shown below in Figure 1, and on Table 1 on the following page:

3 4 5 SANTA ANA FREEWAY I-5 3 394'

Figure 1 – Exhibit of Proposed Sign Locations

Table 1 – List of Proposed Signs

MAP	NAME	DIMENSIONS	SIZE	TYPE	DISPLAY
NO.					
1	Cube	64 by 64	4,096 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
2	Freeway*	59 by 30	1,770 s.f.	Digital/Static	Permanent
3	Exhibit	58 by 18	1,044 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
4	Bubblefest inflatable &	82 by 28	2,296 s.f.	Inflatable &	Temporary
	event date banner	58 by 11	638 s.f.	banner	
5	Exhibit/Program	70 by 20	1,400 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
6	Exhibit/Program	15 by 15	225 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
7	Project Name	50 by 8	400 s.f.	Channel wall	Permanent

The proposed signs include: Sign No. 1 - a banner covering one side of the cube that will be displayed seven months of the year; Sign No. 2 - a permanent static and electronic display sign that currently exists and is entitled by the SD-65 zoning document; Sign No. 3 - a banner promoting seasonal and special exhibits proposed to be in place six months of the year; Sign No. 4 - a inflatable balloon sign promoting Bubblefest, the largest and most high profile exhibit at the Cube that will be in place three weeks each year and a banner identifying the event date (held every spring break); Sign No. 5 - a banner formerly identifying key sponsors and is proposed to identify exhibits and special events that is proposed to be in place year round; Sign No. 6 - a temporary banner identifying seasonal educations programs that will remain in place four months each year; and, Sign Nos. 7 - Two existing channel letter signs for the ticket center (Tickets) and main entrance (Welcome) and a future sign to be located on the top floor of the building entrance (Discovery Cube).

Two signs approved by the SD-65 zoning document are proposed to be forfeited as part of this submittal. They include a monument sign on Main Street identifying the museum and four exhibit banners along Main Street that encompass approximately 440 square feet in size. A separate zoning code clean-up will be processed in the event the proposed sign program is approved. To reduce the number and area of signage, staff is also recommending that Sign No. 3 be removed from the RPSP.

Future signage, which will require an amendment to the sign program, includes the modernization of the existing digital sign facing the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway and the recladding of the cube structure into a unique signage concept. Based on discussions with the Cube's leadership, these changes are likely to be submitted in the next five years.

Project Background

In August 1998, the City Council approved an ordinance establishing Specific Development No. 65 (SD-65) for the Discovery Science Center. Within the SD was a series of signage standards applicable to the Center. Signage allowed under the SD includes multiple banners (four) on Main Street, a seven foot high freestanding monument sign on Main Street, and a static and electronic digital sign facing the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway. As the exhibits and activities for the Cube have evolved over the years, and as technology has changed, the Center is seeking to amend the sign standards currently applicable to their building.

To provide signage flexibility for certain unique uses in the City, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. NS-2861 in 2014. This ordinance, known as the Regional Planned Sign Program Ordinance, amended standards for on premise signage, creating provisions that allow certain regional commercial centers and attractions, automotive sales uses and major regional sites such as the Discovery Cube the ability to obtain a regional planned sign program and install unique signage on the subject premises. The ordinance also requires that the regional planned sign programs be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Project Analysis

Regional planned sign program requests are governed by Section 41-885 of the SAMC. Regional planned sign program requests may be granted when it can be shown that the following can be established:

- The scale and intensity of the proposed signage is consistent and harmonious with surrounding land uses and does not create conditions that could contribute to visual or physical blight intrusion or similar incompatibilities.
- The location of the proposed signage will not contribute towards a hazardous environment for pedestrians, cyclists or motorists on City streets or freeways.
- The proposed signage is compatible with the scale, intensity, and site development characteristics on which it is proposed, which may be determined by height of existing or proposed buildings on-site, the quantity of freestanding buildings, facades, and street frontages, the scale of buildings as they relate to pedestrian and vehicular access surrounding land uses and transportation corridors; visibility from streets, highways, pedestrian areas, rail corridors bikeways other transportation routes, parks, and other public spaces; architecture color(s), material(s), illumination, and other site characteristics; the nature of business activities conducted on-site; and visibility from any property used or zoned for residential purposes.

If these findings can be made, then it is appropriate to grant the regional planned sign program permit. Conversely, the inability to make these findings would result in a denial. Using this information staff has prepared the following analysis, which, in turn forms the basis for staff's recommendation of approval for the program.

The 2014 ordinance requires applications for regional planned sign program be reviewed in a manner consistent with conditional use permits, as detailed in Sections 41-633 through 41-651 of the SAMC. The ordinance contains findings of fact for planned sign programs, which ensure that the scale and intensity of the proposed signage is consistent with surrounding land uses, the proposed signage will not create a hazardous environment for those on City streets or nearby freeways, and that the signage is compatible with the scale, intensity, and site development characteristics.

In analyzing the regional planned sign program request, staff believes that the findings warrant approval of the sign program for several reasons. First, the Cube is eligible to apply for a regional planned sign program as it meets the definition of a regional attraction. The Cube is on a lot that contains a unique, regional attraction. Second, the proposed signage has been designed to be consistent and harmonious with the surrounding land uses and will not contribute to visual or physical blight. In the past, the Cube has on numerous occasions installed signage such as numerous rooftop inflatables on the building, leading to visual blight. As part of this program, rooftop inflatables and other signage not identified in this program will be prohibited, with the exception of the Bubblefest inflatable that will be installed for a three-week period during spring Third, the location of the proposed signage will not contribute towards a break each vear. hazardous environment for pedestrians, cyclists or motorists on City streets or freeways as the signs will be non-illuminated and will not contain any moving and/or blinking lighting elements. Fourth, the location and height of the proposed signs are designed to be compatible with the architectural elements of the building and with the Cube and will take full advantage of the site's orientation toward the I-5 Freeway. Additional signage opportunities will maximize views of the site for motorists travelling on the I-5 Freeway, as well as to pedestrians and cyclists on local City streets, thereby providing an economic boost for a regional, non-profit organization. Fifth, the signs will be installed on large building walls up to three stories in height, ensuring the signs are in scale and compatible with the structure that they will be mounted on. Finally, staff from the Planning Division and City Attorney's Office discussed the sign program with a representative from Caltrans responsible for sign enforcement in Orange County. Based on our discussion, the proposed sign program has been found to be in compliance with Caltrans signage requirements.

Staff is requiring a series of conditions of approval for the project. These conditions include incorporating "Santa Ana" into any permanent signage to be installed on the premises, allowing the installation of public service announcement signage if requested by the City, prohibiting inflatables as mentioned earlier in the report, and prohibiting illumination of the temporary signage. Approval of the regional planned sign program, in conjunction with the conditions of approval, will continue to allow the Discovery Cube of Orange County the ability to be the key science museum in the region.

Public Notification

The project site is not located within the boundaries of an established neighborhood association. However, staff contacted the presidents of the nearby Floral Park and Park Santiago Neighborhood Associations to inform them of the project and answer any questions related to the proposed project. Moreover, the project site was posted with a notice advertising this public hearing, a notice was published in the Orange County Reporter, and mailed notices were sent to all property owners and tenants within 500 feet of the project site. At the time of this printing, no correspondence, by phone, written, or electronic, had been received from any members of the public.

CEQA Analysis

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the proposed project is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 15311. This exemption applies to structures accessory to a commercial use, with the proposed on-premise signs serving as minor structures that are accessory to the primary science museum.

The proposed signs are new elements that have been found by the City's development review agencies to not create any adverse impacts. The signs are proposed to be located on a site that is not designated as an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. The cumulative impact of this proposal will not be significant as the property is already served by roads and utilities, and will not create any adverse impacts such as noise, traffic, or safety. There is no reasonable possibility that the proposal will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The proposed signage is not located within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway and will not damage any scenic resource. The project is not located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Lastly, the signage is not on a site that is listed in the Santa Ana Register of Historic Properties. As a result, Categorical Exemption Environmental Review No. 2019-33 will be filed for this project.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Approval of this item supports the City's efforts to meet Goal No. 3 Economic Development, Objective No. 2 (create new opportunities for business/job growth and encourage private development through new General Plan and Zoning Ordinance policies).

Fiscal Impacts

Approval of this item will continue to allow the Discovery Cube the ability to identify the unique exhibits and programs at the Cube, which in turn will increase the number of annual visitors to the Cube. The overall fiscal benefit cannot be determined at this time.

Conclusion

This sign program will create a comprehensive sign program for the facility that addresses the unique needs of the museum while removing previously entitled signage on the building. Therefore, based on the analysis provided within this report, staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01 as conditioned.

Vince Fregoso, AICP Principal Planner

VF:sb

vf\Reports\RSPG 2018-01 Discovery.051319pc

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 – Resolution Regional Planned Sign Program General

Exhibit 2 – Vicinity Map

Exhibit 3 - Proposed Regional Planned Sign Program

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-xx

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA ANA APPROVING REGIONAL PLANNED SIGN PROGRAM NO. 2018-01 AS CONDITIONED FOR THE DISCOVERY CUBE OF ORANGE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT LOCATED AT 2500 NORTH MAIN STREET

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA ANA AS FOLLOWS:

<u>Section 1</u>. The Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana hereby finds, determines and declares as follows:

- A. The applicant is requesting approval of Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01 as conditioned to allow the installation of a variety of temporary and permanent wall signs and an inflatable sign at the existing Discovery Cube of Orange County development located at 2500 North Main Street, which is a "regional attraction" per Santa Ana Municipal Code Section 41.885 (a)(3). The proposed regional planned sign program will contain a variety of signage types that will be installed throughout the site and on the buildings.
- B. Santa Ana Municipal Code Section 41-885 requires a regional planned sign program to be approved by the Planning Commission.
- C. On May 13, 2019, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing regarding Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01.
- D. The Planning Commission determines that the following findings, which must be established in order to grant this Regional Planned Sign Program pursuant to Santa Ana Municipal Code Section 41-885, have been established for Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01 to allow for the variety of temporary and permanent wall signs, an inflatable sign and a digital sign at the existing regional science center:
 - The scale and intensity of the proposed signage is consistent and harmonious with surrounding land uses and does not create conditions that could contribute to visual or physical blight intrusion or similar incompatibilities.

The proposed signage is designed to be consistent and harmonious with the surrounding land uses and will not contribute to visual or physical blight. The location and height of the signs are needed due to the orientation of the site toward the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway. The location and height of the proposed signs are designed to be compatible with the architectural elements of the building and with the Cube and will take full advantage of the sites orientation toward the I-5 Freeway. The freeways' development, with a combination of at-grade and below-grade configurations, limits visibility to the Cube. Additional

building signage opportunities will maximize view of the site for pedestrians and cyclists on City streets and motorists on the freeway. Further, signage will be oriented toward traffic on the freeways, streets, and on-site travel lanes, which will minimize impacts on adjacent uses. The digital sign currently exists and will not be modified as part of this proposal. In the past, the Cube has on numerous occasions installed signage such as numerous rooftop inflatables on the building, leading to visual blight. As part of this program, rooftop inflatables and other signage not identified in this program will be prohibited, with the exception of the Bubblefest inflatable that will be installed for a three-week period during spring break each year.

2. The location of the proposed signage will not contribute towards a hazardous environment for pedestrians, cyclists or motorists on City streets or freeways.

The proposed signs will be located on private property that is adjacent to the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway as well as a major local arterial street (Main Street). The signs are designed to be in scale with the surrounding streetscape, which will minimize the potential for creating a hazardous environment for pedestrians, cyclists or motorist travelling in the immediate vicinity. Further, the new signs will not utilize illumination, which will minimize impacts to the motoring public and surrounding uses.

3. The proposed signage is compatible with the scale, intensity, and site development characteristics on which it is proposed, which may be determined by height of existing or proposed buildings on-site; the quantity of freestanding buildings, facades, and street frontages; scale of buildings as they relate to pedestrian and vehicular access surrounding land uses and transportation corridors; visibility from streets, highways, pedestrian areas, rail corridors bikeways other transportation routes, parks, and other public spaces; architecture color(s), material(s), illumination, and other site characteristics; the nature of business activities conducted on-site; and, visibility from any property used or zoned for residential purposes.

The proposed signage will be compatible with the scale and site development characteristics on which they are proposed as the signs will be placed in strategic locations intended to maximize visibility. Further, the signs will be installed on large building walls up to three stories in height, ensuring the signs are in scale and compatible with the structure that they will be mounted on. The signs will also be visible from local streets and a freeway whose viewships are limited by overcrossings, significantly wide rights-of-way, and below-grade configurations. Further, the proposed signage is an appropriate level of signage for a regional attraction such as the Cube. Finally, the proposed signs will be architecturally compatible with one another and with the building found at the Cube.

Section 2. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the proposed project is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 15311. Section 15311 applies to structures accessory to a commercial use, with the proposed on-premise signs serving as minor structures that are accessory to the primary regional center use. The proposed signs are new elements that have been found by the City's development review agencies to not create any adverse impacts. The signs are proposed to be located on a site that is not designated by federal, state, or local agencies to be an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. The cumulative impact of this proposal will not be significant as the property is already served by roads and utilities, and will not create any adverse impacts such as noise, traffic, or safety concerns. There is no reasonable possibility that the proposal will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The proposed signage is not located within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway and will not result in damage to scenic resources. The project is not located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Lastly, the signage is not on a site that is considered a historical resource or that is listed in the Santa Ana Register of Historic Properties. As a result, Categorical Exemption Environmental Review No. 2019-33 will be filed for this project.

The Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana after conducting the public Section 3. hearing hereby approves Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01 as conditioned in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference. This decision is based upon the evidence submitted at the abovesaid hearing, which includes but is not limited to: The Request for Planning Commission Action dated May 13, 2019 and exhibits attached thereto as Exhibit B; and the written or public testimony, all of which are incorporated herein by this reference.

ADOPTED this 13th day of May, 2019 by the following vote:

AYES:

Commissioners:

NOES:

Commissioners:

ABSENT:

Commissioners:

ABSTENTIONS: Commissioners:

Mark McLoughlin Chairman

APPROVED AS TO FORM:	
Sonia R. Carvalho, City Attorney	
Ву:	
Lisa Storck	
Assistant City Attorney	
CERTIFICATE C	F ATTESTATION AND ORIGINALITY
	ary, do hereby attest to and certify the attached Resolution n adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Santa
Date:	
	Recording Secretary
	City of Santa Ana

EXHIBIT A

Conditions for Approval of Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01

Conditions for Approval

Regional Planned Sign Program No. 2018-01 is approved subject to compliance, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Planning Manager, with all applicable sections of the Santa Ana Municipal Code, the California Administrative Code, the California Building Standards Code and all other applicable regulations.

The applicant must comply in full with each and every condition listed below <u>prior to</u> exercising the rights conferred by this sign program.

The applicant must remain in compliance with all conditions listed below throughout the life of the sign program. Failure to comply with each and every condition may result in the revocation of the sign program.

A. <u>Planning Division</u>

- All signs not identified within this sign program shall be prohibited.
- 2. The maximum size of the signs shall be limited to the square footage identified as follows:

SIGN	NAME	DIMENSIONS	SIZE	TYPE	DISPLAY
NO.					
1	Cube	64 by 64	4,096 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
2	Freeway*	59 by 30	1,770 s.f.	Digital/Static	Permanent
3	Exhibit	58 by 18	1,044 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
4	Bubblefest inflatable	82 by 28	2,296 s.f.	Inflatable &	Temporary
	& event date banner	58 by 11	638 s.f.	banner	
5	Exhibit/Program	70 by 20	1,400 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
6	Exhibit/Program	15 by 15	225 s.f.	Banner	Temporary
7	Project Name	50 by 8	400 s.f.	Channel wall	Permanent

- 3. The property owner shall comply with Santa Ana Municipal Code Section 41-638.2 that pertains to graffiti abatement.
- 4. All signage shall comply with all federal, state and local laws, regulations and permitting requirements.
- 5. The electronic reader board sign shall incorporate "Santa Ana" or the City logo into the signs electronic messaging.
- 6. The Cube banner shall be devoted to advertising a special display or event occurring on the premises.

- 7. No roof top inflatables, except for the Bubblefest inflatable, shall be permitted on the premises.
- 8. Illumination shall be prohibited on all temporary (banner and inflatable) signage.
- 9. Sign No. 3 as shown on the proposed RPSP shall be removed.
- 10. Signage for public service announcements (PSA) shall be made available at the request of the City. Any PSA sign to be installed shall be at the sole expense of the City.
- 11. Any minor amendment to the regional planned sign program must be submitted to the Planning Division for review. At that time, staff will determine if administrative relief is available or the approved sign program must be amended.

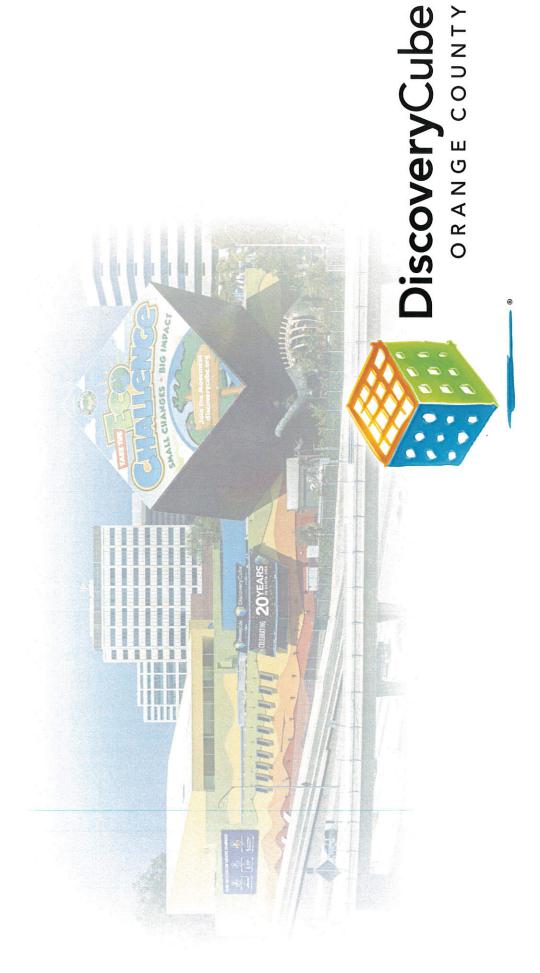
3/26/2019 RPSP No. 2018-01, Discovery Cube of Orange County 2500 North Main Street SD59 SD65 R₁ **SD31** R1 N Riverside SITE R1 R1 Santa Ana Boundary Zoning R1 Zone Description
Single-family Residence Two-family Residence Suburban Apartment Multiple-family Residence Residential Estate R₁ Commercial Residential Specific Plan Specific Development Planned Shopping Center South Main Street Commercial District Community Commercial-museum District Community Commercial R1 Arterial Commercial General Commercial Light Industrial

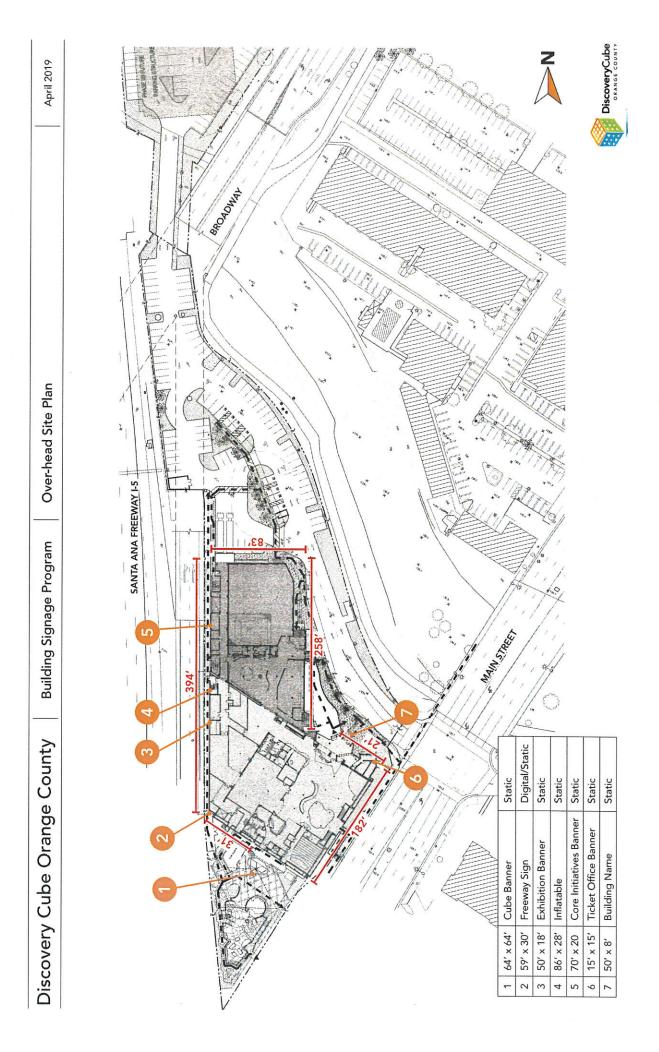


Heavy Industrial Professional Government Center Open Space

General Agricultural

300 feet







Banner changes out approximately twice a year and is on the Cube a total of seven months during the year To promote seasonal temporary exhibitions to the Cube. PURPOSE

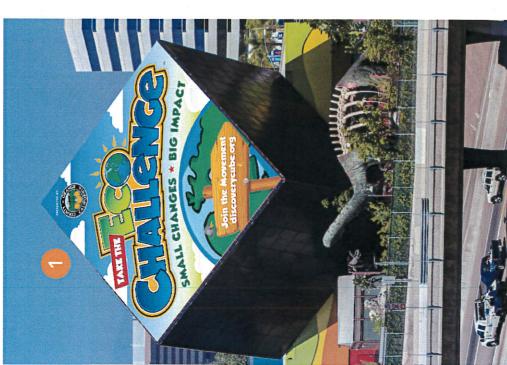
Front of Cube structure, south facing (See diagram at left) LOCATION

Exhibition name, date of exhibition and potential exhibition sponsor SIGN COPY

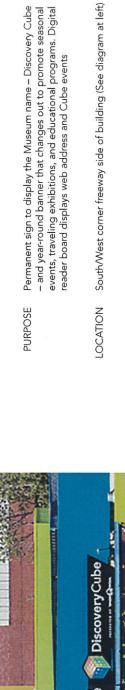
Mesh/vinyl Banner SIGN CONSTRUCTION/ MATERIALS Future three to five year plan to replace face of the Cube with a digital sign. To include enhanced lighting Note:





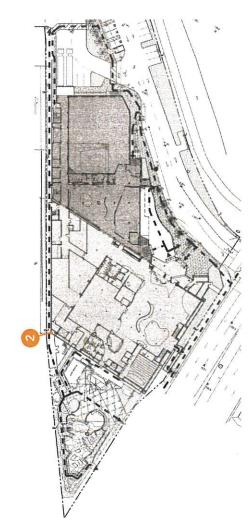






Exhibition name, event program and date of exhibition SIGN COPY

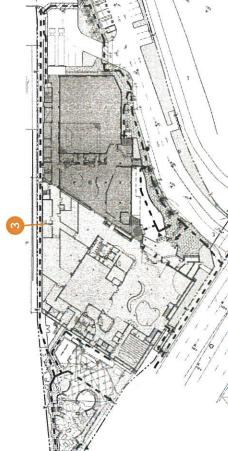
Digital reader board and vinyl banner SIGN CONSTRUCTION/ MATERIALS Future three to five year plan to replace current freeway sign with a digital board Note:





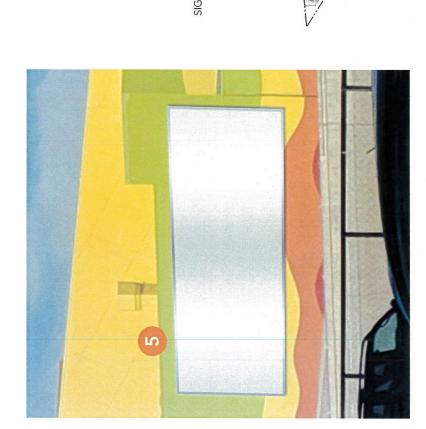


April 2019







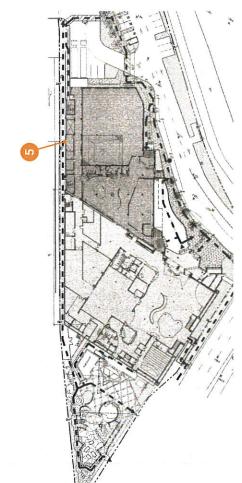


PURPOSE In place year-long to promote Discovery Cube's non-profit statement and four core initiatives. Healthy Living, Environmental Stewardship, STEM, and Early Learners

LOCATION West side end of building/freeway side (See diagram at left)

SIGN COPY Sign copy to be developed. Intent of copy is to highlight Discovery Cube's non-profit statement, and tie to the four core initiative programing and exhibitions in the Cube.

SIGN CONSTRUCTION/ Vinyl banner with sliver metal frame MATERIALS





April 2019



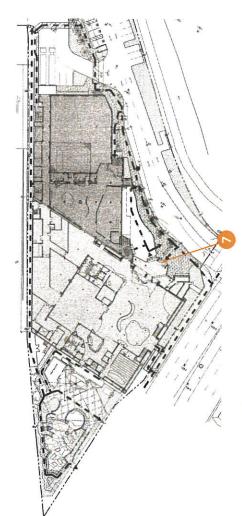


SIGN COPY Discovery Cube (Future three to five year proposed plan)

DISCOVERY

SIGN CONSTRUCTION/
MATERIALS

Note: Tickets and Welcome are signs currently in place as part of the 2015 expansion process. They are permanent lettering. Individual channel letters. Only the Welcome is illuminated.
Size of the signs: 2' by 10' each



WELCON

