



# CITY OF ATASCADERO

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### Administrative Use Permit Hearing **A G E N D A**

The City of Atascadero's Zoning Hearing Officer will hold a public hearing at **11:30 a.m.** or later on **Thursday, May 9, 2019** at City Hall, Room 106, 6500 Palma Ave., Atascadero, to consider the following projects:

1. **7770 MORRO ROAD, USE19-0039**: The project is an application to allow an additional monument sign. Staff recommendation is for the Hearing Officer to approve the AUP with a condition that the existing monument sign be removed before issuing building permits for a new sign, OR deny the request and require the applicant to redesign the existing monument sign to incorporate his sign. **(Murton)** (*Mariah Gasch, Assistant Planner*)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Any court challenge to the actions taken at the public hearing may be limited to considering only those issues raised at the public hearing described in this notice or in written correspondence to the City of Atascadero at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Any decision of the Hearing Officer is final unless appealed to the Planning Commission within 14 days of the action. Any person aggrieved by the decision may file an appeal. Appeal forms are available in the Community Development Department or on the City's website ([www.atascadero.org](http://www.atascadero.org)). The fee for filing an appeal is \$762 and must accompany the appeal documentation.

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# CITY OF ATASCADERO

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Administrative Hearing Agenda Report

ITEM # 1

**FROM:** Mariah Gasch

**MEETING DATE:** May 9, 2019

**FILE NUMBER:** USE 19-0039

**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 7770 Morro Road

**SITUATION:** The applicant, Dr. Ian Murton, is proposing one new monument sign on the property with his office. The site has three existing signs including one existing multi-tenant monument sign, one suspended sign and one tenant directional sign. The proposed sign is 28 square feet, double-sided, and would be approximately six feet tall including the posts that would support it. The sign face would be a light tan color with dark lettering. The posts would be painted a dark brown color to match the building. The sign that the applicant is requesting would be a second monument sign less than 200 feet away from the existing monument sign on the same parcel. The applicant is requesting the exception because he is concerned about the visibility of his office from Morro Road/Highway 41.

**EVALUATION:** The site has an existing multi-tenant monument sign that is approximately 90-square feet. This sign serves the building on the property behind Dr. Murton's office. Dr. Murton's name is listed on this sign but he is not a tenant of the rear building. There is an easement over the project site for this sign to be located here. However, staff cannot locate permits for the existing monument sign. The existing suspended sign is approximately 6 square feet and the tenant directional sign is 5 square feet. The tenant directional sign is not included in the total aggregate sign area. Including the new sign, the aggregate total would be approximately 120 square feet. Atascadero Municipal Code (AMC) 9-15.007 limits sign area for this zoning district to 150 square feet.

AMC 9-15.008 limits ground monument signs to one sign per 200 linear feet. The applicant is requesting an exception to allow two monument signs to be less than a quarter of the distance that the Municipal Code requires.

CalTrans will do frontage improvements in the future that will require the applicant to reduce the size of the existing monument sign as it is currently within the right-of-way and a new sidewalk will be constructed along the front of the property close to the existing monument sign.

Staff is concerned that the addition of another large sign will clutter the site and add confusion. Additionally, the new sign will set a precedent for multiple signs on one property. The proposed sign may partially block the view of the existing monument sign from drivers going north. Vice versa, the existing sign could potentially hide the new sign from drivers going south.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Administrative Hearing Officer:

- Deny the applicant's request and require the applicant to redesign the existing monument sign to incorporate his sign.
- Approve the applicant's proposed sign with a condition that the existing monument sign be removed or relocated before issuing permits for a new sign.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exemption CEQA – Guidelines Section 15311
<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Exemption §§ 21000, et seq & _____
<input type="checkbox"/> No Project – Ministerial Project

**Findings**

AMC 9-15.011 requires the Hearing Officer to make the following 4 findings:

1. *The need for such signing is based on the purposes set forth in Section 9-15.002;*

The proposed sign does not accomplish three of the required purposes. Section 9-15.002 (b) describes the purpose to “encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication in the City and reduce possible traffic and safety hazards from confusing or distracting signs.” Section 9-15.002 (c) describes the purpose to “Implement quality sign design standards that are consistent with the City’s General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Appearance Review Guidelines”. Finally, Section 9-15.002 (h) describes the purpose to “Limit the size and number of signs to levels that reasonably allow for the identification of a residential, public or commercial location and the nature of any such commercial business.”

2. *The opportunity to combine signs for more than one (1) use on a single sign structure has been considered;*

The applicant has considered combining signs and does not believe it is the best option. However, with upcoming changes that will be required with the Caltrans Project, staff believes that there is an opportunity to combine signs to comply with appearance review and the General Plan.

3. *For freeway-oriented signs, the sign area and height are the minimum needed to achieve adequate visibility along the freeway due to highway ramp locations and grade differences; and*

The proposed sign is not freeway oriented.

4. *Conformance with all other applicable codes and ordinances of the City, including, but not limited to, the Zoning Ordinance, General Plan and its several elements, and the appearance review guidelines. (Ord. 604 § 2, 2016)*

Improving the appearance and character of Atascadero, including signage, is a Framework Principle of the General Plan. General Plan Policy 1.3 states: "Enhance the rural character and appearance of the City, including commercial corridors, gateways and public facilities." Staff does not see adding an additional sign as being consistent with this policy. It does not appear to be enhancing the appearance of the site at one of the city's major gateways.

**Conditions**

1. Permits shall not be issued for a new sign unless the existing monument sign is removed.

**Code Requirements**

1. AMC 9-15 (Sign Ordinance)
2. AMC 9-1.112 Administrative Use Permit

**Action:**

- ☐ Approve
- ☐ Approve as modified
- ☐ Deny
- ☐ Continue to : \_\_\_\_\_ to allow \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Continue indefinitely to allow: \_\_\_\_\_

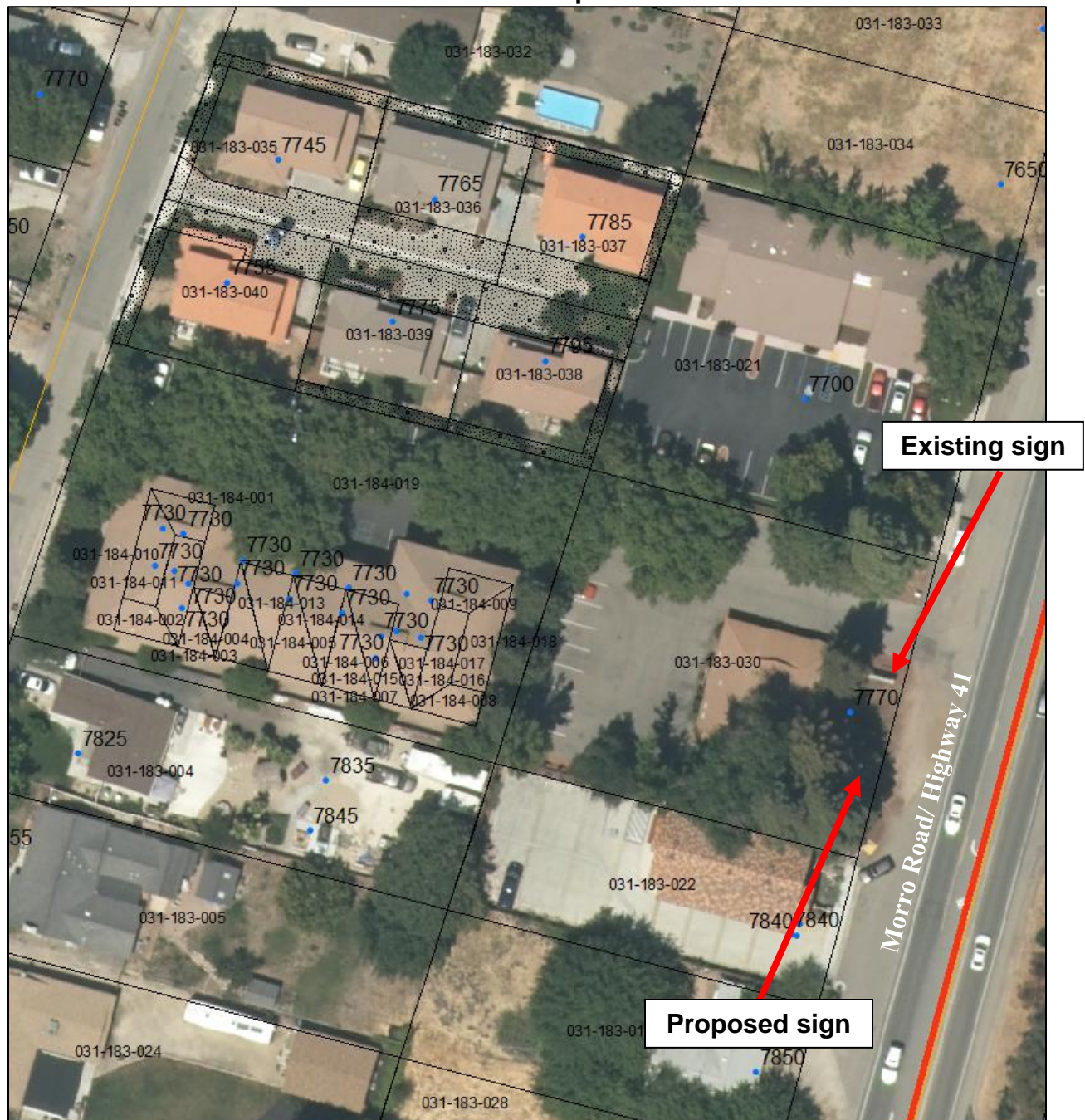
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Hearing Officer

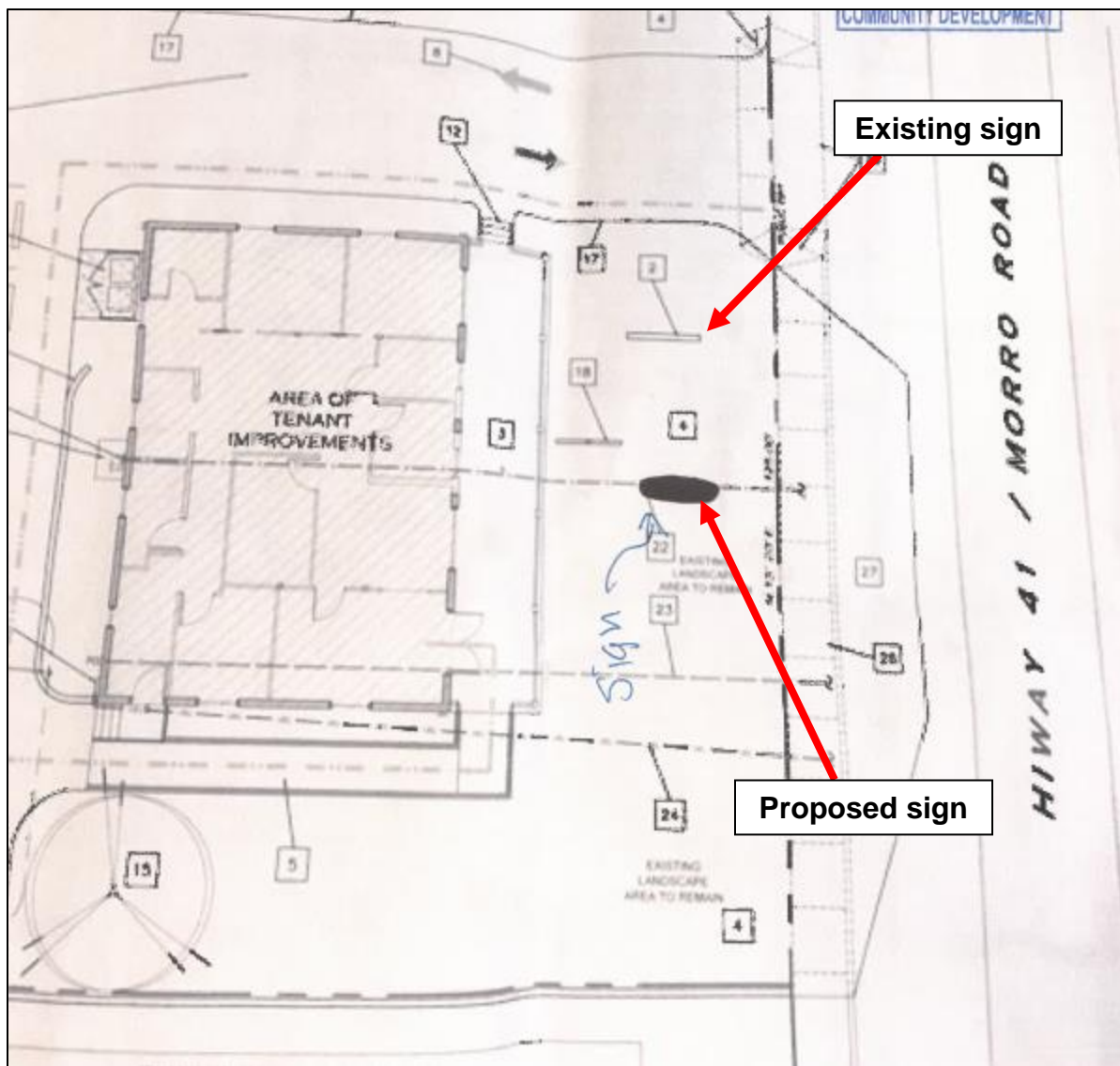
**Attachment 1: Location Map**  
**USE 19-0039**

**Aerial Map**



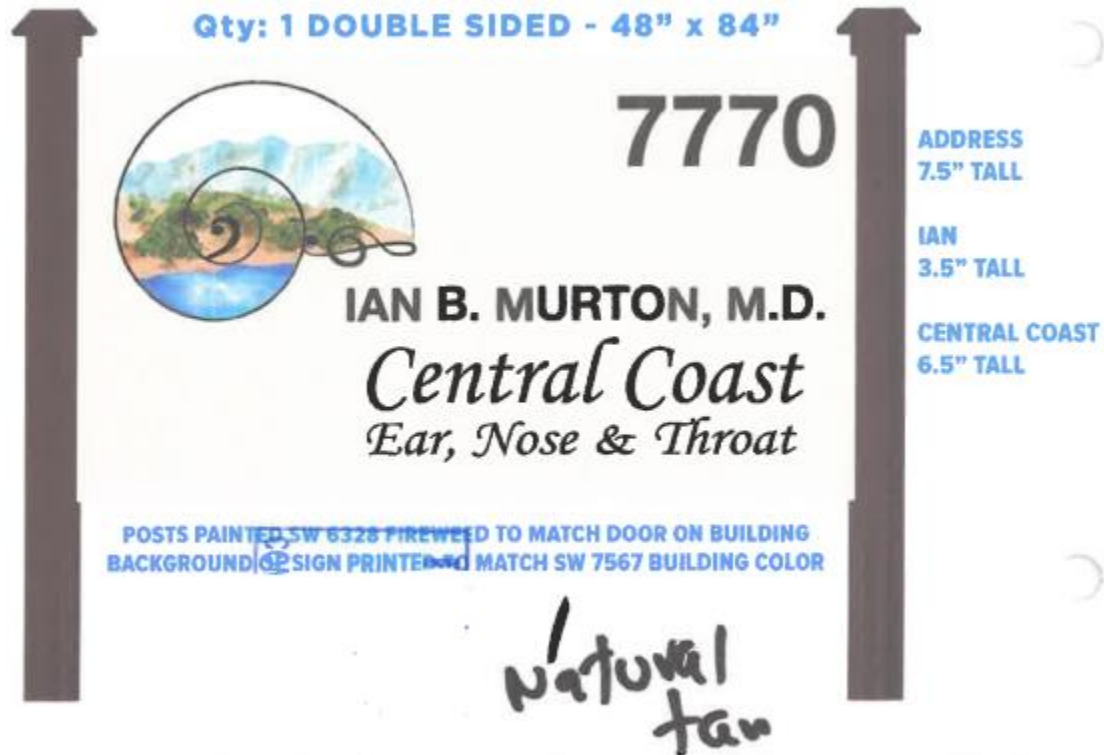


Proposed Site Plan



Attachment 3: Proposed Sign  
USE 19-0039

Proposed Sign



TOTAL HEIGHT  
OF SIGN W/  
POSTS  
APPROX 6'

INSTALLED 2 FEET INTO THE GROUND USING 6" x 6" POSTS



**View looking south on Highway 41**



**View looking north on Highway 41**





**View looking at the frontage**

