



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH ZONING ADMINISTRATOR STAFF REPORT

April 16, 2026
Agenda Item No. 2

SUBJECT: Sage Hill School Sign Program (PA2026-0034)
▪ Comprehensive Sign Program
▪ Modification Permit

SITE LOCATION: 20402 Newport Coast Drive

APPLICANT: CAA Planning

OWNER: Sage Hill School

PLANNER: Jerry Arregui, Assistant Planner
949-644-3249 or jarregui@newportbeachca.gov

LAND USE AND ZONING

- **General Plan Land Use Plan Category:** Private Institutions (PI)
- **Zoning District:** Private Institutions (PI)
- **Overlay District:** Housing Opportunity (HO) Coyote Canyon Area (HO-5) subarea

PROJECT SUMMARY

A request for a comprehensive sign program (CSP) to establish design parameters for all signage at Sage Hill School that are visible from the public right of way. Also included is a request for a modification permit to authorize increased sign area for four sign types, as they exceed the maximum sign area allowed by Chapter 20.42 of the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC) by more than 30%. If approved, the project will supersede all previous approvals related to signage.

The CSP requests the following deviations:

- a. Sign Type A and B – Placement of wall signs outside of the middle 50% of building frontages, where the NBMC requires wall signs to be located within the middle 50% of the building frontage;
- b. Sign Type D – Retention of two existing monument signs originally approved by the County of Orange (County), which are located at the intersection of Newport Coast Drive and the school's entrance road, where the NBMC allows for one freestanding sign;
- c. Sign Type D – Retention of two existing 40-foot-wide monument signs where the Zoning Code allows a maximum width of 9 feet and;

- d. Sign Type D – Retention of one existing monument sign without an address plate identifying the subject property, where the NBMC requires all monuments signs to have an address plate.

The Modification Permit proposes the following:

- a. Sign Type A – Installation of a 375-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the primary frontage of the middle school gymnasium building, where the NBMC allows a maximum of 50 square feet;
- b. Sign Type B – Installation of a 36-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the secondary frontage of the middle school gymnasium building, where the NBMC allows only 50% of the primary frontage allowance, in this case a maximum of 25 square feet;
- c. Sign Type C – Installation of a 196-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the rear of the baseball field scoreboard, where the NBMC allows a maximum of 50 square feet and;
- d. Sign Type D – Retention of two existing 240-square-foot monument signs, originally approved by the County, where the NBMC allows for a maximum of 75 square feet;

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Conduct a public hearing;
- 2) Find this project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311 under Class 11 (Accessory Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment; and
- 3) Adopt Draft Zoning Administrator Resolution No. _ approving the Comprehensive Sign Program and Modification Permit filed as PA2026-0034 (Attachment No. ZA 1).

DISCUSSION

Project Setting and Background

- The subject property measures approximately 28 acres in area and is located on the east side of Newport Coast Drive, near State Highway 73. The property is developed with a private school known as Sage Hill School. Sage Hill School was originally permitted and developed under the jurisdiction of the County of Orange prior to annexation into the City.
- Sage Hill School is abutted to the south by open space and a portion of the closed Coyote Canyon Landfill beyond, to the west by Newport Coast Drive and the main portion of the closed Coyote Canyon Landfill beyond, to the north and east by State Highway 73, with the City of Irvine beyond as shown in the Vicinity Map provided as Attachment No. ZA 2. The surrounding area is largely undeveloped and is part of the Central Subregion of the Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) for the Central and Coastal Subregions of Orange County.
- The nearest residential community within the City is located approximately 2,800 feet to the southwest, across Newport Coast Drive and is not within the line of sight of the school.
- The property has approximately 1,100 feet of frontage along Newport Coast Drive, which is a major 6-lane undivided roadway with a speed limit of 60 miles per hour. Due to an intervening parcel acting with a large slope, the property is not visible from the right-of-way and is setback approximately 350 feet. Access to the property is only available via one entrance road along Newport Coast Drive.
- The property has two existing sign approvals including a Staff Approval (PA2009-019) for a 17-foot-tall wall with signage location in the interior of the campus and a Modification Permit (PA2025-0161) for a 183-square-foot, internally illuminated sign on the rear of an existing baseball field scoreboard.

Comprehensive Sign Program

- Section 20.42.120 (Comprehensive Sign Program) of the NBMC requires a CSP whenever three or more non-exempt signs are proposed for single-tenant development. Sage Hill School is currently constructing a new middle school and gymnasium building and is proposing additional signage and must obtain approval of a CSP.
- The school has existing signage throughout the property; however without the benefit of a CSP. The CSP will integrate all signage while providing the means for

the flexible application of sign regulations for projects that reasonably require multiple signs. The CSP provides Sage Hill School with adequate identification while guarding against an excessive proliferation of signs.

- Sage Hill School is developed with several buildings over a 28-acre property and has many signs that are only visible to on campus visitors, such as building names and classroom numbers. Signs within the interior of the campus that are only visible to campus visitors are not included in the CSP. The CSP only includes signs that are visible from a public street, road, highway, right-of-way or parking lot, consistent with the NBMC definition of a sign.
- Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC requires that wall signs be located within the middle 50% of building frontages. The placement of Sign Type A in the middle 50% of the primary building frontage is not feasible, as a stairwell projection disrupts the continuity of the frontage. Sign Type B is proposed on the secondary frontage of the middle school building, facing west, and is also not located within the middle 50% of the frontage. While Sign Type B is intended to be primarily visible to athletes and athletic event attendees on the baseball field, it is also partially visible to motorists on State Highway 73. The proposed sign location most closely portrays the intent of this standard, which is to ensure that the signs are centrally located and provide clear identification.
- Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC allows a maximum of one free-standing sign per site. Sites with more than 300-feet of frontage are allowed additional freestanding signs through approval of a CSP. There are two free-standing monument signs (Sign Type D) at the intersection of Newport Coast Drive and the school's entrance road. These monument signs were originally approved by the County. Due to an intervening parcel with topography that obstructs visibility of the school, the two existing monument signs are necessary to ensure motorists in both directions do not inadvertently miss the only entrance road providing access to the school.
- The signs are proportional to the building and property frontages and are limited to the locations specified in the Project Plans (Attachment No. ZA 3).

Modification Permit

- Section 20.42.120 (Comprehensive Sign Program) of the NBMC specifies that deviations in sign area greater than 30% over what is allowed require the approval of a modification permit.
- Sign Type A is a 375-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the primary frontage of the middle school building. Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC, allows a maximum of 50 square feet of sign area for wall signs placed on the primary frontage. The middle school building's primary frontage measures

approximately 8,000 square feet with a height ranging from 38 to 54 feet and a width of approximately 228 feet. A 375-square-foot sign will cover approximately 4% of the building's frontage and is expected to more appropriately fit the scale of this large institutional building for motorist view.

- Sign Type B is a 36-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the secondary frontage of the middle school building. Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC allows secondary frontage signs a maximum of sign area equal to 50% of the primary frontage sign area, which is 25 square feet in this case. The middle school building's secondary frontage measures approximately 8,000 square feet with a height of approximately 55 feet and a width of approximately 160 feet. A 36-square-foot sign will cover less than 1% of the building frontage and is expected to more appropriately fit the scale of this large institutional building.
- Sign Type C is a 196-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the rear of the baseball field scoreboard facing Newport Coast Drive, which is located approximately 350 feet away due to an intervening, open space, parcel. Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC allows a maximum of 50 square feet of sign area for wall signs. The scoreboard measures approximately 499 square feet, with a height of 19 feet, 9 inches and a width of 25 feet, 3 inches. The rear of the scoreboard is unfinished, with visible structural support members. The unfinished area will be covered with an exterior grade, dark, canvas material. A 196-square-foot, internally illuminated, sign identifying the school will be installed on center, and will cover approximately 36% of the rear surface of the scoreboard. A 183-square-foot version of this sign was previously authorized by the Modification Permit filed as PA2025-0161.
- Sign Type D authorizes the two existing 240-square-foot freestanding monument signs at the intersection of Newport Coast Drive and the school's entrance road. Table 3-17 of Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC, allows a maximum of 75 square feet of sign area for monument signs. The two monuments measure approximately 240 square feet with a height of 6 feet and a width of 40 feet. Each monument is indirectly illuminated and has approximately 117 square feet of text area. These signs are vital to identifying the only access road to the school for both motorists and pedestrians, as the school is not visible from the intersection.
- Strict application of the NBMC limits the size of the signs, which would not provide for adequate identification of the school given the large scale of the property, surrounding infrastructure and open space, and the large distances from the wall sign locations to Newport Coast Drive which experiences higher speeds of travel. The requested increase in sign area will provide identification signage that is appropriately sized for visibility from the right-of-way without dominating or diminishing the open space character of the area.

- The property is adjacent to the NCCP/HCP, the closed Coyote Canyon landfill which is also located within HO-5 subarea and may support future housing, and within proximity of State Highway 73. To ensure there are no lighting impacts to the adjacent area, several conditions of approval are provided to prevent lighting impacts. This includes: Condition of Approval No. 7 to provide a photometric study for all new signs, Condition of Approval No. 8 to prohibit all signage from being illuminated between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., daily, Condition of Approval No 9 to require a nighttime inspection from the Code Enforcement Division, Condition of Approval No. 10 to require all signage to include a dimmer, and Condition of Approval No. 11 to authorize the Community Development Director to order the dimming of light sources.
- If approved, the two existing monument signs will no longer be considered nonconforming and will no longer be subject to the limitations listed in Section 20.42.140 (Nonconforming Signs) of the NBMC.
- If approved, this project will supersede Staff Approval No. SA2009-002 (PA2009-019) and the Modification Permit filed as PA2025-0161.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project is categorically exempt under Section 15311 – Class 11 (Accessory Structures) of the State CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment.

The Class 11 exemption applies to projects that include the construction or replacement of minor structures such as on-premise signs accessory to (or appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities. The signs are incidental and accessory to the existing school use and will not intensify or alter the use. Therefore, the Class 11 exemption is applicable. The exceptions to this categorical exemption under Section 15300.2 are not applicable

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was published in the Daily Pilot, mailed to all owners of property within 300 feet of the boundaries of the site (excluding intervening rights-of-way and waterways), including the applicant, and posted on the subject property at least 10 days before the scheduled hearing, consistent with the provisions of the NBMC. Additionally, the item appeared on the agenda for this meeting, which was posted at City Hall and on the City website.

APPEAL PERIOD:

This action shall become final and effective 14 days following the date this Resolution was adopted unless within such time an appeal is filed with the City Clerk in accordance with the provisions Chapter 20.64 (Appeals) of the NBMC within 14 days following the date of the action. For additional information on filing an appeal, contact the Planning Division at 949-644-3200.

Prepared by:



Jerry Arregui
Assistant Planner

JP/ja

Attachments: ZA 1 Draft Resolution
 ZA 2 Vicinity Map
 ZA 3 Project Plans

Attachment No. ZA 1

Draft Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ZA2026-##

A RESOLUTION OF THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, SUPERSEDING STAFF APPROVAL NO. SA2009-002 (PA2009-019) AND THE MODIFICATION PERMIT FILED AS PA2025-0161, AND APPROVING A COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PROGRAM AND MODIFICATION PERMIT FOR INCREASED SIGN AREA FOR A PRIVATE SCHOOL LOCATED AT 20402 NEWPORT COAST DRIVE (PA2026-0034)

THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. STATEMENT OF FACTS.

1. An application was filed by CAA Planning (Applicant) on behalf of Sage Hill School (Owner), with respect to property located at 20402 Newport Coast Drive and legally described as Parcel 1 of Parcel Map No. 97-200 (Property).
2. On November 3, 1998, the County of Orange (County) Planning Commission approved Use Permit No. PA97-0173 authorizing the construction of Sage Hill School, a private high school, on the Property. The Property was annexed into the City on September 26, 2000.
3. On February 27, 2009, the Planning Director approved Staff Approval No. 2009-002 (PA2009-019) authorizing the construction of a 17-foot-tall wall with signage located within the interior of the school campus.
4. On December 7, 2023, the Planning Commission approved the Site Development Review, Minor Use Permit, and Traffic Study filed as PA2022-0227 authorizing increased student enrollment and the construction of a middle school campus on the northern portion of the Property.
5. On February 12, 2026, the Zoning Administrator approved the Modification Permit filed as PA2025-0161, authorizing the installation of a 183-square-foot, internally illuminated, sign located on the rear of an existing scoreboard.
6. The Applicant requests a comprehensive sign program (CSP) to establish design parameters for all signage on the Property that is visible from the public right of way. The Applicant requests the following deviations from Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC):
 - a. Sign Type A and B - Placement of wall signs outside the middle 50% of a building frontage, whereas the NBMC requires wall signs to be located within the middle 50% of the building frontage;

- b. Sign Type D - Retention of two existing monument signs, originally approved by the County, which are located at the intersection of Newport Coast Drive and the school's entrance road, where the NBMC only allows for one freestanding sign;
 - c. Sign Type D - Retention of two existing 40-foot-wide monument signs where the Zoning Code allows a maximum width of 9 feet and;
 - d. Sign Type D – Retention of one existing monument sign without an address plate identifying the subject property, where the NBMC requires all monuments signs to have an address plate.
7. Additionally, the Applicant requests a modification permit to authorize increased sign area for four sign types, as they exceed the maximum sign area allowed by Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC by more than 30%.
- a. Sign Type A - Installation of a 375-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign on the primary frontage of the middle school gymnasium building, where the NBMC allows a maximum of 50 square feet;
 - b. Sign Type B - Installation of a 36-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the secondary frontage of the middle school gymnasium building, where the NBMC allows only 50% of the primary frontage allowance, in this case a maximum of 25 square feet;
 - c. Sign Type C - Installation of a 196-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign on the rear of the baseball field scoreboard, where the NBMC allows a maximum of 50 square feet and;
 - d. Sign Type D - Retention of two existing 240-square-foot monument signs, originally approved by the County, where the NBMC allows for a maximum of 75 square feet.
8. Collectively, the CSP and the modification permit constitute the Project.
9. Section 20.42.120 (Comprehensive Sign Program) of the NBMC authorizes the Zoning Administrator to approve a CSP without a public hearing. However, because the Project includes a modification permit, Section 20.50.30 (Multiple Permit Applications) of the NBMC requires that multiple applications for the same project be processed concurrently and be reviewed and approved, modified, or denied by the highest review authority, which in this case is the Zoning Administrator via a public hearing.
10. The Project will authorize two monument signs (Sign Type D) which were previously installed under the jurisdiction of the County and are currently considered legal nonconforming. The signs will no longer be considered nonconforming and will no longer be subject to the limitations listed in Section 20.42.140 (Nonconforming Signs) of the NBMC.

11. Approval of the Project will supersede Staff Approval No. SA2009-002 (PA2009-019) and the Modification Permit filed as PA2025-0161.
12. The Property is categorized as Private Institutions (PI) by the Land Use Element of the General Plan and located within the Private Institutions (PI) Zoning District. The Property is also located within the Coyote Canyon Area (HO-5) subarea of the Housing Opportunity (HO) Overlay Zoning District.
13. The Property is not located within the Coastal Zone.
14. A public hearing was held on April 16, 2026, online via Zoom. A notice of the time, place, and purpose of the hearing was given in accordance with the NBMC. Evidence, both written and oral, was presented to and considered by the Zoning Administrator at this hearing.

SECTION 2. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT DETERMINATION.

1. This Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311 under Class 11 (Accessory Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment.
2. The Class 11 exemption applies to projects that include the construction or replacement of minor structures such as on-premise signs accessory to (or appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities. The signs are incidental and accessory to the existing school use and will not intensify or alter the use. Therefore, the Class 11 exemption is applicable.
3. The exceptions to this categorical exemption under Section 15300.2 are not applicable. The project location does not impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern, does not result in cumulative impacts, does not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances, does not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, is not a hazardous waste site, and is not identified as a historical resource.

SECTION 3. REQUIRED FINDINGS.

Comprehensive Sign Program

Pursuant to Section 20.42.120 (Comprehensive Sign Program) of the NBMC, a CSP allows for an increase in sign height by 20% above that allowed and an increase in sign area by 30% above that allowed. The CSP shall comply with the standards of the NBMC, except that deviations are allowed with regard to sign area, total number, location, and/or height of signs. In accordance with Section 20.42.120(E) (Comprehensive Sign Program – Standards) of the NBMC, the following standards and facts in support of such standards are set forth:

Standard:

- A. *The proposed sign program shall comply with the purpose and intent of this Chapter [Chapter 20.42 – Sign Standard], any adopted sign design guidelines and the overall purpose and intent of this Section [Section 20.42.120 – Comprehensive Sign Program].*

Facts in Support of Standard:

1. Section 20.42.120 (Comprehensive Sign Program) of the NBMC specifies that a CSP is required when three or more nonexempt signs are proposed for single-tenant development. Sage Hill School is constructing a new, three-story, middle school and gymnasium building within the northern portion of the Property and is proposing additional signage. The school has existing signage throughout the Property; however, it is without the benefit of a CSP.
2. Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC defines a sign as any device, fixture, placard or structure, including its component parts, that draws attention to an object, product, place, activity, opinion, person, establishment, institution, organization, or place of business, or that identifies or promotes the interests of any person and that is to be viewed from any public street, road, highway, right-of-way or parking area. Sage Hill School is developed with several buildings over 28 acres and has many signs that are only visible to those on campus. These interior signs are to assist with navigation around campus. The CSP does not include any interior signage and only includes signage that is visible from a public street, road, highway, right of way, or parking lot, consistent with the NBMC definition of a sign.
3. The CSP includes deviations of standards provided in Table 3-17 (Signs Allowed in OS, PI, PR and PF Zooning Districts) of Section 20.42.070 (Standards for Permanent Signs) and Section 20.42.080 (Standards for Specific Types of Permanent Signs) of the NBMC while complying with the purpose and intent of Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC.
4. Section 20.42.080 of the NBMC requires wall signs to be located within the middle 50% of the building frontage. The placement of a Sign Type A in the middle 50% of the primary building frontage is not feasible, as a stairwell projection disrupts the continuity of the frontage. Sign Type B is also not located within the middle 50% of the frontage. Sign Type B is proposed on the secondary frontage of the middle school building, facing west, and is intended to be primarily visible to athletes and attendees at the baseball field. It is also partially visible to motorists on State Highway 73. The proposed sign location most closely portrays the intent of this standard, which is to ensure that the signs are centrally located and provide clear identification.
5. Table 3-17 of the NBMC allows a maximum of one free-standing sign per site; however, for sites with more than 300-feet of frontage, additional freestanding signs may be approved through a CSP. Two free-standing monuments signs, Sign Type D, exist at the intersection of Newport coast Drive and the school's entrance road. Due to an intervening open space parcel with topography that obstructs visibility of the school from Newport Coast Drive, the two existing monument signs are necessary to ensure motorists do not inadvertently miss the only entrance road providing access to the

school. The two signs provide identification to motorists traveling both southbound and northbound on Newport Coast Driveway.

6. Section 20.42.080 of the NBMC requires all freestanding monument signs to have an address plate. The northbound facing monuments signs include address; however, the southbound monument on the opposite side of the entry road does not. Given their proximity, the existing address plate adequately fulfills wayfinding and identification needs. Requiring a second, duplicative address plate would not improve wayfinding.
7. The CSP provides Sage Hill School with adequate identification while guarding against an excessive proliferation of signs. The signs are proportional to the building and property frontages. The sign placement is limited to the locations specified in the sign matrix in Exhibit "B", which are attached hereto and incorporated by reference. The font, colors, and materials of all proposed signage are coordinated to complement the school. Aside from the requested deviations, the project signs comply with all other standards of Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC, including but not limited to illumination standards and construction materials.
8. The CSP is consistent with the Citywide Sign Design Guidelines because the proposed signs are designed to be compatible with the Property and building design in terms of scale, size, and materials. The proposed signs are designed to effectively identify the school without creating sign clutter. The proposed signage is adequately spaced to prevent large clusters of signage and appear less obtrusive to motorists and pedestrians on Newport Coast Drive or State Highway 73.

Standard:

- B. *The proposed signs shall enhance the overall development, be in harmony with, and relate visually to other signs included in the Comprehensive Sign Program, to the structures and/or developments they identify, and to surrounding development when applicable.*

Facts in Support of Standard:

1. The Property is developed with a private school on a large, 28-acre, campus. The school is accessed from Newport Coast Drive through one entry road. The CSP has been designed to provide adequate identification of Sage Hill School without allowing the unnecessary proliferation of signage.
2. All signage will be in harmony with the character and architectural style of Sage Hill School. The placement and size of the wall signs and free-standing signs are complementary to the building size and frontage and size of the Property, respectively. The proposed signs have been designed to use the school color pallet which includes olive green and white hues which are complementary to the beige building façade. Should the illumination prove to be a nuisance, Condition of Approval No. 11 authorizes the Community Development Director to order the dimming of light sources or other remediation upon finding that the sign is excessively illuminated.

Standard:

- C. *The sign program shall address all signs, including permanent, temporary, and exempt signs.*

Fact in Support of Standard

1. Fact 2 in Support of Standard A is hereby incorporated by reference.

Standard:

- D. *The sign program shall accommodate future revisions that may be required because of changes in use or tenants.*

Fact in Support of Standard:

1. The CSP has been designed in anticipation of all signage needs by providing adequate identification from Newport Coast Drive and State Highway 73. Any future operator should be able to utilize the CSP without any substantial changes. Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC authorizes the Community Development Director the ability to approve minor revisions to the CSP if the intent of the original approval is not affected.

Standard:

- E. *The program shall comply with the standards of this Chapter [Chapter 20.42], except that deviations are allowed with regard to sign area, total number, location, and/or height of signs to the extent that the Comprehensive Sign Program will enhance the overall development and will more fully accomplish the purposes and intent of this Chapter [Chapter 20.42].*

Facts in Support of Standard:

1. Fact 4, 5, 6, and 7 in Support of Standard A are hereby incorporated by reference.
2. The CSP is consistent with Chapter 20.42 and is being processed concurrently with a Modification Permit, consistent with Section 20.52.050 (Modification Permits) to allow the maximum sign area of certain signs to be larger than standard NBMC limitations.

Standard:

- F. *The Approval of a Comprehensive Sign Program shall not authorize the use of signs prohibited by this Chapter [Chapter 20.42].*

Fact in Support of Standard:

1. The CSP does not authorize the installation of any prohibited sign types.

Standard:

- G. *Review and approval of a Comprehensive Sign Program shall not consider the signs' proposed message content.*

Facts in Support of Standard:

1. The content of the signs was not considered and the CSP contains no restrictions on message or content.

Modification Permit

Pursuant to Section 20.42.120 (Comprehensive Sign Program) of the NBMC, deviations to sign area greater than 30% are subject to the approval of a modification permit. In accordance with Section 20.52.050 (Modification Permits) of the NBMC, the following findings and facts in support of such findings are set forth:

Finding:

- H. *The requested modification will be compatible with existing development in the neighborhood.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The Property is located within the Private Institutions (PI) Zoning District, which is intended to provide areas appropriate for privately owned facilities that serve the public, including private schools. The Property is developed with a private school known as Sage Hill School which serves 7th through 12th grade students.
2. The Property is abutted to the south by open space and a portion of the closed Coyote Canyon Landfill beyond, to the west by Newport Coast Drive and the main portion of the closed Coyote Canyon Landfill beyond, to the north and east by State Highway 73, with the City of Irvine beyond. The surrounding area is largely undeveloped and is part of the Central Subregion of the Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) for the Central and Coastal Subregions of Orange County. The nearest residential community within the City is located approximately 2,800 feet to the southwest, across Newport Coast Drive, and is not within the line of sight of the Property.
3. The Property has approximately 1,100 feet of frontage along Newport Coast Drive, which is a major 6-lane undivided roadway with a speed limit of 60 miles per hour.
4. Sign Type A is a 375-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the primary frontage of the middle school building facing State Highway 73, which is approximately 200 feet away. Table 3-17 of Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC, allows a maximum of 50 square feet of sign area for wall signs. The middle school building's primary frontage measures approximately 8,000 square feet with a height ranging from 38 to 54 feet and a

width of approximately 228 feet. A 375-square-foot sign will cover approximately 4% of the building frontage and is expected to more appropriately fit in with the scale of this large institutional building and be visible to motorists.

5. Sign Type B is a 36-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the secondary frontage of the middle school building, facing the baseball field and partially facing State Highway 73. Table 3-17 of Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC allows secondary frontage signs a maximum of sign area equal to 50% of the primary frontage sign area, which in this case, is 25 square feet. The middle school building's secondary frontage measures approximately 8,000 square feet with a height of approximately 55 feet and a width of approximately 160 feet. A 36-square-foot sign will cover less than 1% of the building frontage and is expected to more appropriately fit the scale of this large institutional building.
6. Sign Type C is a 196-square-foot, internally illuminated, wall sign located on the rear of the baseball field scoreboard facing Newport Coast Drive, which is located approximately 350 feet away due to an intervening, open space, parcel. Table 3-17 of Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC, allows a maximum of 50 square feet of sign area for wall signs. The scoreboard measures approximately 499 square feet, with a height of 19 feet, 9 inches and a width of 25 feet, 3 inches. The rear of the scoreboard is unfinished, with visible structural support members. The unfinished area will be covered with an exterior grade, dark, canvas material. A 196-square-foot, internally illuminated, sign identifying the school will be installed on center, and will cover approximately 36% of the rear surface of the scoreboard. A 183-square-foot version of this sign was previously authorized by the modification permit filed as PA2025-0161.
7. Sign Type D authorizes the two existing 240-square-foot freestanding monument signs at the intersection of Newport Coast Drive and the school's entrance road. Table 3-17 of Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC, allows a maximum of 75 square feet of sign area for monument signs. The two monuments measure approximately 240 square feet with a height of 6 feet and a width of 40 feet. Each monument is indirectly illuminated and has approximately 117 square feet of text area. These signs are vital to identifying the only access road to the school for both motorists and pedestrians, as the school is not visible from the intersection.
8. Due to the large scale of the surrounding infrastructure and open space, the requested increases in sign area for the aforementioned signs will provide identification signage that is appropriately sized for visibility from the right-of-way without dominating or diminishing the open space character of the area.

Finding:

- I. *The granting of the modification is necessary due to the unique physical characteristic(s) of the property and/or structure, and/or characteristics of the use.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. Fact 2, 3 and 8 in Support of Finding H are hereby incorporated by reference.
2. The nearest commercial development with identification signage is the Newport Coast Shopping Center, located south of the Property at the corner of Newport Coast Drive and San Joaquin Road. The shopping center abuts the public right-of-way which allows for the installation of identification signage adjacent to the right-of-way and walls signs that are visible from the right-of-way. The short distance from the right-of-way ensures visibility to motorists and cyclists. In this case, the increased sign area for the various signs is necessary due to the substantial distance between the Property and the right-of-way due to an intervening, open space parcel. Additionally, the intervening parcel creates a topographic barrier which limits view of the school from the right-of-way. The proposed and existing signs are proportional to the large scale of the Property and the large intuitional buildings.
3. Sage Hill School has an athletics program where the campus regularly hosts a high volume of visiting student athletes, families and spectators from outside the local area. The two existing monument signs (Sign Type D) have a low profile and are subdued, providing limited wayfinding and no advance notice to motorists exiting the State Highway 73 approximately 1,500 feet to the north. The proposed signs on the middle school building (Sign Type A and B) and sign on the rear of the baseball field scoreboard (Sign Type C) will allow for clearer identification of the school from the public right-of-way, assisting first-time visitors in safely identifying the campus during busy athletic events, and reducing the likelihood that motorists miss the left-turn access when southbound on Newport Coast Drive after existing State Highway 73 which. Missing the entrance road would require an additional 600 feet southbound to make a U-turn at the next signalized intersection, resulting in unnecessary vehicle traffic south of the Property.

Finding:

- J. *The granting of the modification is necessary due to practical difficulties associated with the property and that the strict application of the Zoning Code results in physical hardships that are inconsistent with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Code.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The Property is located within the PI Zoning District. The NBMC groups PI along with Open Space (OS), Parks and Recreation (PR), and Public Facilities (PF) as "Special Purpose Zoning Districts." All Special Purpose Zoning Districts are subject to the same design standards for permanent signs. The maximum sign area allowed for a wall sign within these districts is 50 square feet whereas the maximum sign area within a commercial zoning district is 75 square feet. Development within these Special Purpose Zoning Districts may range from parks and open space to schools. School uses appear and function more similarly to commercial use than parks or open spaces and therefore can be granted larger signage allowances without being inconsistent with the intent of the NBMC. The strict application of the NBMC limits the sign area to a maximum of 50

square feet, which would not provide for adequate identification of the school given the large distances from the Property to the right-of-way.

2. The purpose and intent of Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC is to provide users with adequate identification while preserving and enhancing the community's appearance. The regulation of sign area is to ensure that signage does not overwhelm the frontage and create clutter. The proposed signage ensures that the large school, which has limited view from the right-of-way and only one access road, has adequate identification from the right-of-way and does not overwhelm or create signage clutter.
3. Due to the large distance between the school and the right-of-way, limited view of the school from the right-of-way, only one access road to the school, and the high speeds of travel of adjacent roads, an increase in sign area is necessary to address the reduced visibility and readability for passing motorists.

Finding:

- K. *There are no alternatives to the modification permit that could provide similar benefits to the applicant with less potential detriment to surrounding owners and occupants, the neighborhood, or to the general public.*

Fact in Support of Finding:

1. An alternative to Sign Type A and B is to reduce them to 50 square feet in compliance with Chapter 20.42 of the NBMC. However, this alternative would significantly reduce the wall sign area and not provide adequate size for proper identification of the schools given its large scale and distance from the right-of-way.
2. There are no buildings located along the perimeter of the Property that face Newport Coast Drive that would provide an opportunity for signage. Installation of a sign on the rear of the existing scoreboard (Sign Type C) allows for use of an existing structure and prevents the installation of any additional structures to face Newport Coast Drive. Additionally, the retention of the existing monuments signs (Sign Type D), would not result in any increase in the existing sign area.

Finding:

- L. *The granting of the modification would not be detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare, to the occupants of the property, nearby properties, the neighborhood, or the City, or result in a change in density or intensity that would be inconsistent with the provisions of this Zoning Code.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. Fact 2 in Support of Finding J is hereby incorporated by reference.

2. This approval will allow for an increase in area for three proposed wall signs and the retention of two existing monument signs, which will not result in a change in intensity or density of the school.
3. The Property is not visible from any coastal view roads or public viewpoints identified in Figure NR3 (Coastal Views) of the Natural Resources Element of the General Plan
4. The Property is adjacent to the NCCP/HCP, the closed Coyote Canyon landfill which is also located within HO-5 subarea and may support future housing, and within proximity of State Highway 73. To ensure there are no lighting impacts to the adjacent area, Condition of Approval No. 7 requires a photometric study to be prepared prior to building permit issuance for the installation of the proposed signs.
5. Condition of Approval No. 8 prohibits all sign types from being illuminated between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., daily.
6. To ensure the signs are not excessively illuminated, Conditional of Approval No. 9 requires a nighttime inspection to be scheduled with the Code Enforcement Division. Additionally, Condition of Approval No. 10 requires all new signs to include a dimmer, ensuring that there is the ability to reduce sign illumination.
7. Should the illumination prove to be a nuisance, Condition of Approval No. 11 authorizes the Community Development Director to order the dimming of light sources or other remediation upon finding that the sign is excessively illuminated.
8. The proposed sign areas will cover a small area of the building frontages and surfaces which they are located on, are proportional to the Property's large scale, and are oriented to be visible to travelers on Newport Coast Drive and State Highway 73 without spill over into the NCCP area. Based on the NBMC sign illumination requirements and proposed conditions of approval, the proposed signage is not anticipated to negatively impact or be detrimental to occupants of the property, nearby properties, the neighborhood, or the City.

SECTION 4. DECISION.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Zoning Administrator of the City of Newport Beach hereby finds this Project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15311 under Class 11 (Accessory Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment. The exceptions identified in Section 15300.2 do not apply.
2. The Zoning Administrator of the City of Newport Beach hereby approves the Comprehensive Sign Program and Modification Permit filed as PA2026-0034, subject to the conditions set forth in Exhibit "A" and the sign matrix parameters denoted in Exhibit "B", which are attached hereto and incorporated by reference.

3. This Resolution supersedes Staff Approval No. 2009-002 (PA2009-019) and the Modification Permit filed as PA2025-0161, which upon vesting of the rights authorized by this Comprehensive Sign Program and Modification Permit, shall become null and void.
4. This action shall become final and effective 14 days following the date this Resolution was adopted unless within such time an appeal or call for review is filed with the City Clerk in accordance with the provisions Chapter 20.64 (Appeals) of the NBMC.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THIS 16TH DAY OF APRIL, 2026.

Liz Westmoreland, AICP, Zoning Administrator

EXHIBIT "A"

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

(Project-specific conditions are in italics)

1. Signs shall be in substantial conformance with the approved site plan, elevations, and sign details stamped and dated with the date of this approval, except as modified by applicable conditions of approval.
2. The Project is subject to all applicable City ordinances, policies, and standards, unless specifically waived or modified by the conditions of approval.
3. The Applicant shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Material violation of any of those laws in connection with the use may be cause for revocation of this Modification Permit.
4. *Prior to the installation of signs, a building permit shall be obtained.*
5. All signs shall be maintained in accordance with Section 20.42.170 (Maintenance Requirements) of the NBMC.
6. *The locations of the signs are limited to the designated areas and shall comply with the limitations specified in the Sign Matrix, included as Exhibit "B".*
7. *Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall prepare a photometric study for review and approval by the Planning Division for all new signs. The study shall show that light spill over shall not exceed 1-foot candle at all property lines.*
8. *Illumination for all sign types shall be prohibited between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., daily.*
9. *Prior to building permit final inspection, the Applicant shall schedule a nighttime inspection with the Code Enforcement Division.*
10. *All new signage shall be designed with a dimmer to allow for a reduction in illumination.*
11. The sign shall not be excessively illuminated in accordance with the provisions of Section 20.42.060.H (Illuminated Signs and Lights) of the NBMC. If in the opinion of the Community Development Director the illumination creates an unacceptable negative impact on surrounding land uses or environmental resources, the Director may order the dimming of light sources or other remediation upon finding that the sign is excessively illuminated.
12. This CSP and Modification Permit may be modified or revoked by the Zoning Administrator if determined that the proposed uses or conditions under which it is being operated or maintained is detrimental to the public health, welfare or materially injurious

to property or improvements in the vicinity or if the property is operated or maintained so as to constitute a public nuisance.

13. Prior to issuance of a building permit, a copy of the Resolution, including conditions of approval Exhibit "A" shall be incorporated into the Building Division and field sets of plans.
14. Should the property be sold or otherwise come under different ownership, any future owners or assignees shall be notified of the conditions of this approval by either the current business owner, property owner or the leasing agent.
15. This approval shall expire and become void unless exercised within 24 months from the actual date of review authority approval, except where an extension of time is approved in compliance with the provisions of Title 20 (Planning and Zoning) of the NBMC.
16. To the fullest extent permitted by law, applicant shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless City, its City Council, its boards and commissions, officials, officers, employees, and agents from and against any and all claims, demands, obligations, damages, actions, causes of action, suits, losses, judgments, fines, penalties, liabilities, costs and expenses (including without limitation, attorney's fees, disbursements and court costs) of every kind and nature whatsoever which may arise from or in any manner relate (directly or indirectly) to City's approval of the **Sage Hill School Sign Program** including, but not limited to the **Comprehensive Sign Program and Modification Permit filed as PA2026-0034**. This indemnification shall include, but not be limited to, damages awarded against the City, if any, costs of suit, attorneys' fees, and other expenses incurred in connection with such claim, action, causes of action, suit or proceeding whether incurred by applicant, City, and/or the parties initiating or bringing such proceeding. The applicant shall indemnify the City for all of City's costs, attorneys' fees, and damages which City incurs in enforcing the indemnification provisions set forth in this condition. The Applicant shall pay to the City upon demand any amount owed to the City pursuant to the indemnification requirements prescribed in this condition.

EXHIBIT “B”

Sage Hill School Sign Program Matrix

Frontages:

Primary Frontage:

- a) Newport Coast Drive (West – Monument and Scoreboard Signs)
- b) State Highway 73 (North Elevation of Middle School Building)

Secondary Frontages:

- b) Baseball Field (West Elevation of Middle School Building)

Sign Type		Frontage	Dimensions	Notes
Sign Type A	Wall Sign	Primary – North Elevation of Middle School	Maximum Number: 1 Maximum Sign Area: 375 sq. ft. Maximum Letter/Logo Height: 5'	
Sign Type B	Wall Sign	Secondary – West Elevation of Middle School	Maximum Number: 1 Maximum Sign Area: 36 sq. ft. Maximum Letter/Logo Height: 6'	
Sign Type C	Wall Sign	Primary – Newport Coast Drive	Maximum Number: 1 Maximum Sign Area: 196 sq. ft. Maximum Letter/Logo Height: 14'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed on the rear of the baseball field scoreboard

Sign Type D	Freestanding	Primary – Newport Coast Drive	Maximum Number: 2 Maximum Sign Area: 117 sq. ft. Maximum Letter/Logo Height: 3'-4" Maximum Wall Height: 6' Maximum Wall Length: 40'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located at the intersection of Newport Coast Drive and the school's entrance road.
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Notes/Requirements:

- a) Sign locations shall be as depicted on approved plans.
- b) Matrix is only intended to apply to signs visible from the public right-of-way, consistent with the NBMC definition of a sign.
- c) Signs shall comply with Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC, except as provided in this sign matrix.
- d) Sign Designs shall be consistent with Citywide Sign Design Guidelines Manual.
- e) Pursuant to NBMC Section 20.42.120(F), the Community Development Director may approve minor revisions to this approval if the intent of the original approval is not affected.
- f) Illumination for all sign types shall be prohibited between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., daily.
- g) All new signage shall be designed with a dimmer to allow for a reduction in illumination.
- h) Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a photometric study shall be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Division for all new signs. The study shall show that light spill over shall not exceed 1-foot candle at all property lines.
- i) Prior to building permit final inspection, the Applicant shall schedule a nighttime inspection with the Code Enforcement Division.

Attachment No. ZA 2

Vicinity Map

VICINITY MAP



Comprehensive Sign Program
Modification Permit
PA2026-0034
20402 Newport Coast Drive

Attachment No. ZA 3

Project Plans

SIGN PROGRAM
FOR

SAGE HILL SCHOOL

ADDRESS:
20402 Newport Coast Dr.
Newport Coast, CA 92657

ZONE:
Private Institution

BUILDING FLOORS:
1-2

LAND USE:
School

BUILDING PROPERTY OWNER:
SAGE HILL SCHOOL
20402 Newport Coast Dr.
Newport Coast, CA 92657
949.219.0100

PROGRAM DESIGNER:
JB3D
731 N. Main Street
Orange, CA 92868
Contact: Kylan Soni
714.482.4872



NOT TO SCALE

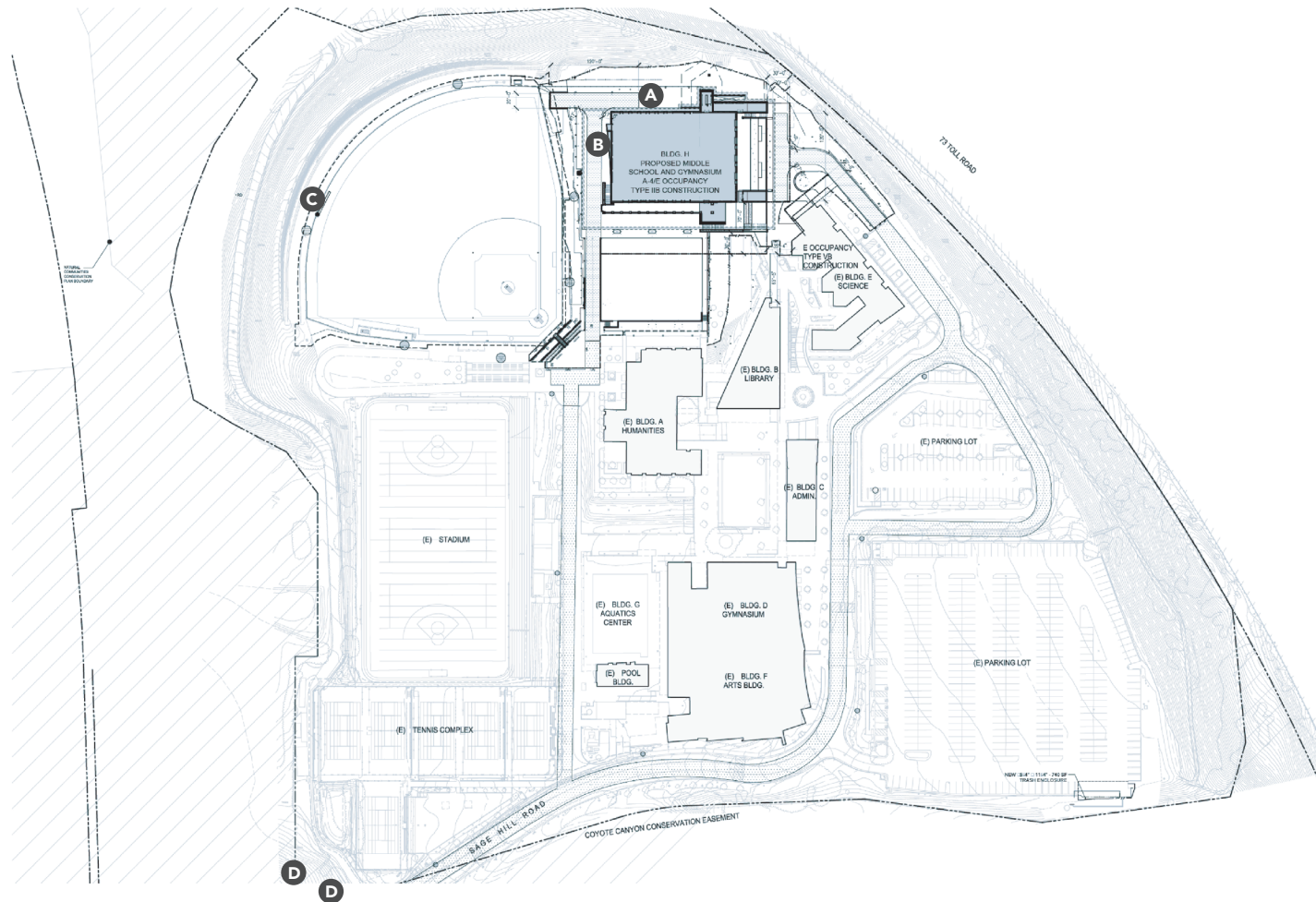
February 13, 2026

SAGE HILL
SIGN PROGRAM

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- 0.1 Sign Summary
- 0.2 Sign Location Plan
- 1.0 Sign Type A - Campus ID - North
- 2.0 Sign Type B - Campus Crest
- 3.0 Sign Type C - Campus ID - West
- 4.0 Sign Type D - Entry Monument

SIGN TYPE	SIGN-SPECIFIC PAGE	DESCRIPTION	SIGN LOCATION	MAX. QUANTITY	MAX. SIGN AREA	MAX. WIDTH OF SIGN	MAX. HEIGHT OF SIGN	LOGOS ALLOWED	ILLUMINATION PERMITTED	PERMIT REQUIRED
A	1.0	Campus ID - North	On Building	1	375 SqFt	75'0"	5'0"	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	2.0	Campus Crest	On Building	1	36 SqFt	6'0"	6'0"	Yes	Yes	Yes
C	3.0	Campus ID - West	Scoreboard	1	196 SqFt	26'0"	30'0"	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	4.0	Entry Monument	Freestanding	2	240 SqFt	40'0"	6'0"	Yes	Yes	Yes



LEGEND

- A** Campus ID - North
- B** Campus Crest
- C** Campus ID - West
- D** Entry Monument

SITE PLAN
SCALE: NTS



PAGE 0.2

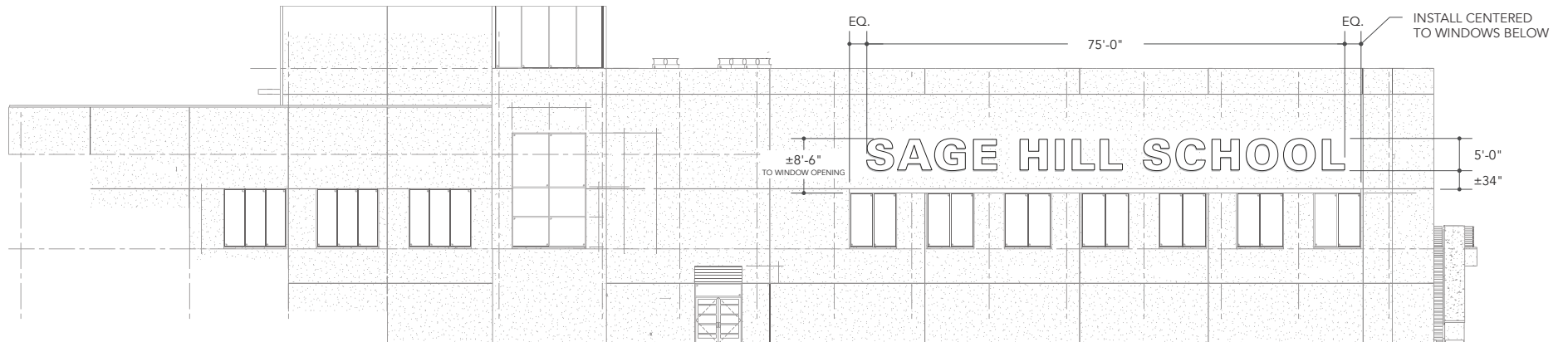
SAGE HILL
SIGN PROGRAM

February 13, 2026

SIGN TYPE A - CAMPUS ID - NORTH

Purpose:	To identify the campus.
Maximum Number:	1
Location:	North Elevation of Middle School & Gym Building. See page 1.1.
Orientation:	Parallel to wall facing north.
Sign Copy:	Campus name and logo only.
Maximum Sign Area & Size:	Width: 75'-0" Max Height: 5'-0" Max. Max Area: 375 sq. ft.
Sign Construction/Material:	Individual letters and logos only. No cabinet signs or cloud signs allowed. No exposed wiring allowed.
Illumination:	Internally illuminated. No exposed neon lighting is permitted. No flashing or blinking allowed. (Internally illuminated signs include opaque sign backgrounds and the only portion of the sign that appears as illuminated is the actual lettering and/or a registered trademark or logo).
Logo:	Permitted.
Letterstyle:	Project Font and Logo-typefaces permitted.
Color:	Finish colors must contrast with the building background.

SIGN TYPE A - CAMPUS ID - NORTH



NORTH INSTALL ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'

SIGN TYPE B - CAMPUS CREST

Purpose:	To identify the campus to vehicles and pedestrians.
Maximum Number:	1
Location:	West Elevation of Middle School & Gym Building. See page 2.1.
Orientation:	Parallel to wall facing Newport Coast Drive.
Sign Copy:	Campus name and logo only.
Maximum Sign Area & Size:	Width: 6'-0" Max Height: 6'-0" Max Max Area: 36 sq.ft.
Sign Construction/Material:	No exposed wiring allowed.
Illumination:	Internally illuminated. No exposed neon lighting is permitted. No flashing or blinking allowed. (Internally illuminated signs include opaque sign backgrounds and the only portion of the sign that appears as illuminated is the actual lettering and/or a registered trademark or logo).
Logo:	Permitted.
Letterstyle:	Project Font and Logo-typefaces permitted.
Color:	Finish colors must contrast with the building background.

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SAGE HILL
SIGN PROGRAM

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SIGN TYPE B - CAMPUS CREST



INSTALL ELEVATION
SCALE: NTS

February 13, 2026

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SIGN PROGRAM

SIGN TYPE C - CAMPUS ID - WEST

Purpose:	To identify the campus.
Maximum Number:	1
Location:	At baseball field scoreboard.
Orientation:	Facing west toward Newport Coast Drive.
Sign Copy:	Campus name and logo only.
Maximum Sign Area & Size:	Pylon Width: 26'-0" Max Pylon Height: 30'-0" Max Max Area: 196 sq. ft.
Sign Construction/Material:	Digital print graphics on panaflex fabric mounted to aluminum tension frame.
Illumination:	Internally illuminated. No exposed neon lighting is permitted. No flashing or blinking allowed. (Internally illuminated signs include opaque sign backgrounds and the only portion of the sign that appears as illuminated is the actual lettering and/or a registered trademark or logo).
Logo:	Permitted.
Letterstyle:	Project Font and Logo-typefaces permitted.
Color:	Any.

SIGN TYPE C - CAMPUS ID - WEST



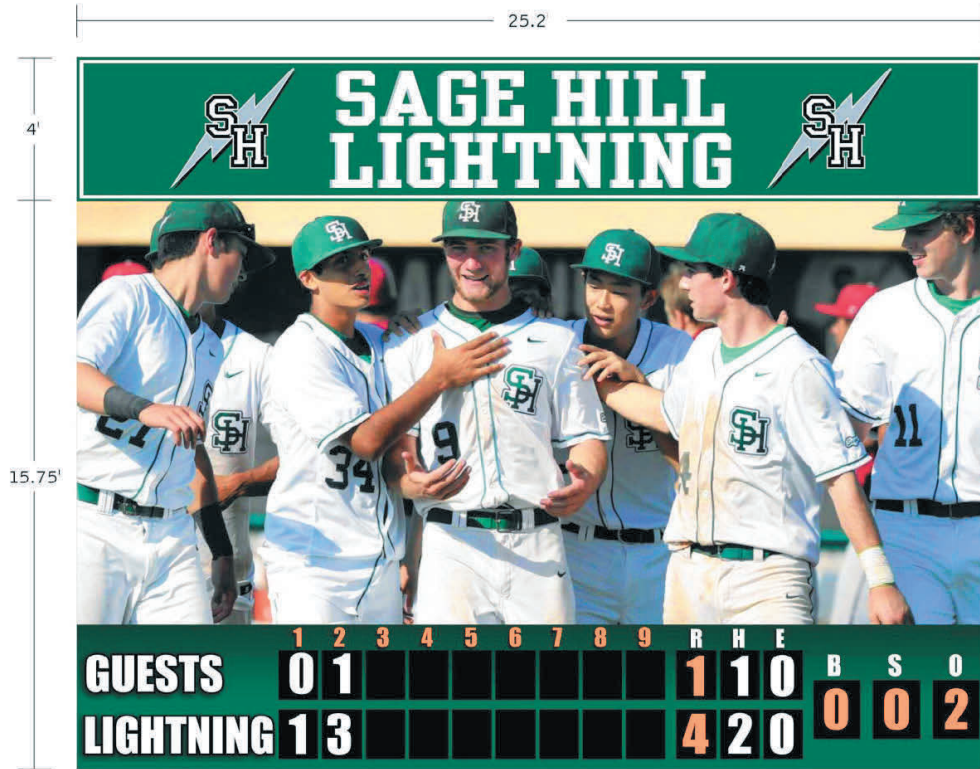
ELEVATION VIEW - DAY
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

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SAGE HILL
SIGN PROGRAM

SIGN TYPE C - CAMPUS ID - WEST



*EXISTING CONDITION - FRONT OF SCOREBOARD



*EXISTING CONDITION - BACK OF SCOREBOARD

SIGN TYPE D - ENTRY MONUMENT

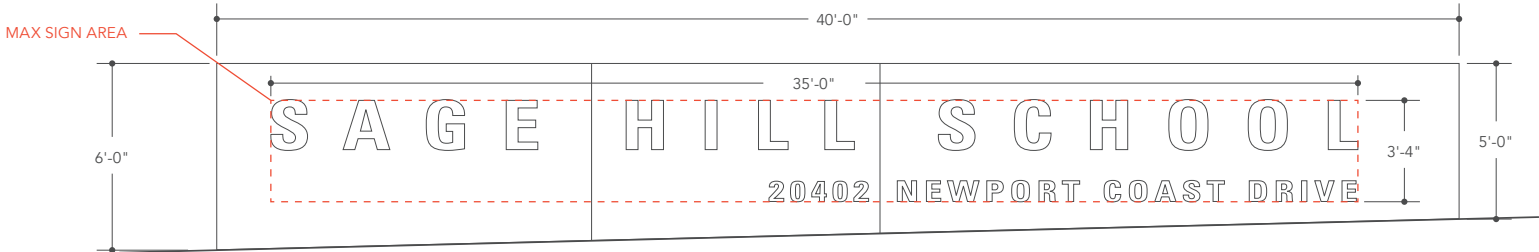
Purpose:	To identify the campus.
Maximum Number:	2
Location:	Freestanding.
Orientation:	Facing Newport Coast Drive.
Sign Copy:	Campus name, logo and address only.
Maximum Sign Area & Size:	Width: 40'-0" Max Height: 6'-0" Max Max Area: 240 sq. ft.
Sign Construction/Material:	Concrete.
Illumination:	External Illumination.
Logo:	Permitted.
Letterstyle:	Project Font and Logo-typefaces permitted.
Color:	Any.

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SAGE HILL
SIGN PROGRAM

SIGN TYPE D - ENTRY MONUMENT



ELEVATION VIEW
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'

SIGN TYPE D - ENTRY MONUMENT



LEFT MONUMENT



RIGHT MONUMENT

EXISTING CONDITION
SCALE: NTS

SAGE HILL SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM BUILDING & GYM
EXISTING + FUTURE / from CA - 73 on ramp

LPA



EXISTING



FUTURE



*EXISTING CONDITION - SOUTHBOUND NEWPORT COAST DRIVE



*PROPOSED CONDITION - SOUTHBOUND NEWPORT COAST DRIVE