

**Palmer High School Sign Variance Proposal  
2018**

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Palmer High School's staff and student body with regards to an LED sign for the outside of our building. For the past four years, senior classes have saved up to be able to afford a new sign that can better inform the students and families that are involved with Palmer High School of the important events we hold. We have been informed that because Palmer sits in the middle of a residential district that is also a major thoroughfare. A bright LED sign could cause problems among the drivers and the families in the area. While we understand that concern, we have come up with a compromise with the hope of receiving a variance to help us update our way of providing information to the community.

While Palmer High School may fall in a certifiable residential district, we are also in the heart of a business district, where downtown shops and restaurants are open late, as people walk the streets of Tejon, Cascade, and Nevada. We ask that our LED sign not only be a flat image, to help prevent traffic accidents as people would get distracted reading a rolling sign; but also that our sign be put on a timer, where it would be turned on between 6am and 11pm Monday through Thursday and between 7am and 12p to be courteous to the people of the downtown community. Being that our school is very interactive with our student body, and local community we hope that this sign will help us advertise events like dances, athletics, and theatre productions. Though we understand that city code prohibits LED signs from being used for civic use, we feel as though our sign would be much more than just that.

With the help from City Council, we will be able to better reach out to not only the community within Palmer High School, but also the people of the downtown community. This sign will be beneficial in providing information to the families of the community that are harder to reach. We hope that this new sign will help build unity between the students of Palmer but also the surrounding community, in that we will be encouraging them to act as a part of our growing school population.

Student Cabinet members are working hard to complete the approval for the sign variance, getting bids for the new sign, and filling out all the paperwork needed to complete this task. This will be a fully student- led effort, with a student presentation to the City Council at the end. The current sign is old, broken, and outdated. For the office staff to change it and update it, it takes at least 2 people and even then the letters are old and dirty, the cover is difficult to hold up, and it becomes a limiting difficult task just to update one or two lines. We'd like to update this and help show our pride in Palmer High School. The estimated cost for this project is \$12,000. Student Council has raised a third of that (\$4000) and we are requesting help from the Alumni Association and the Principal/Athletic Director to help fund the rest. We respectfully ask the Alumni Association for \$4000 to help with this cause. If that amount is not available, we would graciously and enthusiastically accept any part of that amount. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration

### Palmer High School Sign Variance: Traffic Concerns

Because of the downtown setting in which William J. Palmer High school is located, it is clear why a possible electric sign can be concerning to those in charge of maintaining the city's traffic. However, through the review of the sign site and comparison of the sign's possible location to that of other local electric signs, it is clear that the sign can be a safe, and extremely helpful addition to the Palmer high school community, and therefore that of Colorado Springs.

As a school that is 1600 students strong, Palmer is constantly hosting events in order to maintain a healthy level of school spirit, raising funds for students in need, and encouraging every Palmer Terror to become involved at the school. A sign that can more accurately display information surrounding these events is therefore critical. It was noticed by a Palmer Student that one school with a population 4 times smaller than that Palmer's was able to possess an electric sign, despite its location next to a road that is larger, and faster than Nevada Avenue. The Spring's Studio for Academic Excellence is located on Constitution Avenue in East Colorado Springs, see *Figure 1*. The District 49 school has a digital sign that it not only multiple colors, but is also in close proximity to a road with a speed limit that it almost double that of the posted limit of Nevada Avenue, the closest road to the intended location for the Palmer Sign.

*Figure 1*



Additionally, as an active member of the downtown Colorado Springs community, Palmer's communication with nearby businesses is crucial for the existence of an effective relationship between the student body and downtown businesses. An electric sign capable of more messages ensures this level of effective communication. Many local businesses, such as restaurants near Palmer, bring in a great deal of revenue from Palmer students. With the knowledge of school events, these local businesses can introduce promotions according to the event and thus the sign proves to not only be assistive to success of Palmer events, but also downtown businesses.

#### Palmer High School Sign Variance: Residential Concerns

A concern that has been brought to the attention of the Palmer Student Council is that the introduction of an LED electric sign could disturb nearby residents. In order to respect those nearby residents, the sign would be placed on a timer that would prevent it from staying on throughout and disturbing the rest time for Palmer's downtown neighbors. This restriction would also allow the sign to be on during the day time when most people would drive by and read about upcoming events and school information.

#### Palmer High School Sign Variance: Ability to Comply With City Regulations

In addition to addressing residential and traffic concerns, Palmer High school is more than willing to comply with regulations set forth by the city. The LED sign will not possess any animation or flashing action that could act as a distraction to passing automobiles. The sign will follow set cycling limits and transitions will not surpass one second. As previously mentioned, the sign will advertise school hosted events, and will therefore avoid off-site advertising, thus following another regulation set by the city.

#### Palmer High School Sign Variance: Conclusion

As high school students, we are extraordinarily grateful for the opportunity to leave a meaningful legacy to our school, and in the process gain critical knowledge surrounding the inner workings of the city

of Colorado Springs. We have used city regulations and a detailed planning checklist in order to ensure that this proposal is accurate and effective.