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## Planning Commission Staff Report

**Project Type:** Sign Approval

**Meeting Date:** April 11, 2011

**From:** Justin Wyse, AICP *JW*  
Project Planner

**Location:** 2 Clarkson Wilson Ctr

**Applicant:** Hutkin Development Company.

**Description:** Clarkson Wilson Centre: A request for a free-standing sign to exceed six (6) feet in height, with an outline area to exceed fifty (50) square feet located on a 5.428 acre tract of land zoned "PC" Planned Commercial District, located at the intersection of Clarkson Road and Wilson Avenue.

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### PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Hutkin Development Company has submitted a request for a free-standing sign for the Clarkson Wilson Centre development. The proposed sign is 11 feet 11 inches in height, as measured from the elevation of Clarkson Road, with an outline area of 100 square feet. The proposed sign is before the Planning Commission for review because the sign height and outline area exceed the allowance for administrative review and approval. The Department of Planning and Public Works has reviewed the request and submits the following report.

### LAND USE AND ZONING HISTORY OF SUBJECT SITE

The site was originally rezoned to a "C-8" Planned Commercial District by St. Louis County by Ordinance 6,227, which was subsequently amended by St. Louis County Ordinances 13,666 and 13,903. On November 7, 1988, the City of Chesterfield approved Ordinance 204, which permitted right in and right out access onto Clarkson Road prior to the Wilson Road relocation and the City of Chesterfield Ordinance 332 approved two (2) sit down restaurants instead of one sit down restaurant as originally allowed under

St. Louis County Ordinance 13,666. In March of 1992, the City of Chesterfield approved Ordinance 655, which allowed for bi-directional access at Clarkson Road and incorporated the changes in Ordinance 204 and 332 into one ordinance. The City of Chesterfield approved Ordinance 1117 in December of 1995 to allow for temporary signs to be located on the site in December of 1995.

In 2009, the City of Chesterfield approved Ordinance 2547 approving a change in zoning to a, "PC" Planned Commercial District. Ordinance 2547 modified the restrictions on uses on the property and required the development to adhere to the City of Chesterfield City Code's regulations for signs.

Below is an image of the existing monument sign located at Clarkson Wilson Centre.



#### **Surrounding Land Use and Zoning**

The land use and zoning for the properties surrounding this parcel are as follows:

North: There is a vacant parcel immediately to the north.

South: The property to the South is the Clarkson Woods South subdivision.

East: The property to the east is the Clarkson Woods subdivision.

West: The property to the west is in the City of Clarkson Valley. Also, the mortuary is located to the southwest side of the intersection of Clarkson Road and Wilson Avenue.



## STAFF ANALYSIS

### **Zoning**

The subject site is currently zoned "PC" Planned Commercial District under the terms and conditions of City of Chesterfield Ordinance 2547. The request is before Planning Commission for review because the petitioner is requesting to exceed the dimension requirements permitted to be administratively approved per Section 1003.168 C2(2)a. of the City of Chesterfield Zoning Ordinance.

The modifications being requested to section 1003.168 C2(2a) are as follows:

1. *The height of any freestanding sign shall not exceed six (6) feet. The height may be increased up to twenty (20) feet subject to Planning Commission approval.*

The applicant is requesting a sign height of 11 feet 11 inches. The height is measured from the average grade of Clarkson Road, as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance.

2. *The maximum outline area per face of any freestanding sign shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet. The maximum outline area of the sign face may be increased up to one hundred (100) square feet subject to Planning Commission approval.*

The application is requesting an outline area of 100 square feet.

Below are the items to be addressed by applicants seeking to exceed the sign area / height permitted to be administratively approved under the sign regulations with input included from Staff on each item. A copy of the letter submitted by the applicant is included in your packet for review.

*(3) Planning Commission Approval. The proponent of an sign subject to Planning Commission Approval as set out in subsequent sections shall file with the Department of Planning, in addition to those document requirements specified in Section 1003.168.3(1), a written statement addressing the following information:*

*a. The underlying business, directional, or informational purpose of such a sign.*

The application for the increase in sign area includes several purposes for the proposed sign including:

- Update, upgrade, and generally enhance the aesthetic appearance of the development;
- Incorporate tenant identification on the sign; and
- Enhancement of the sign is an integral part of the developer's ongoing effort to upgrade the center.

*b. Why such a sign should exceed the maximum height and/or outline area specification for a particular sign in order to accomplish the underlying purpose as stated in item (a) above.*

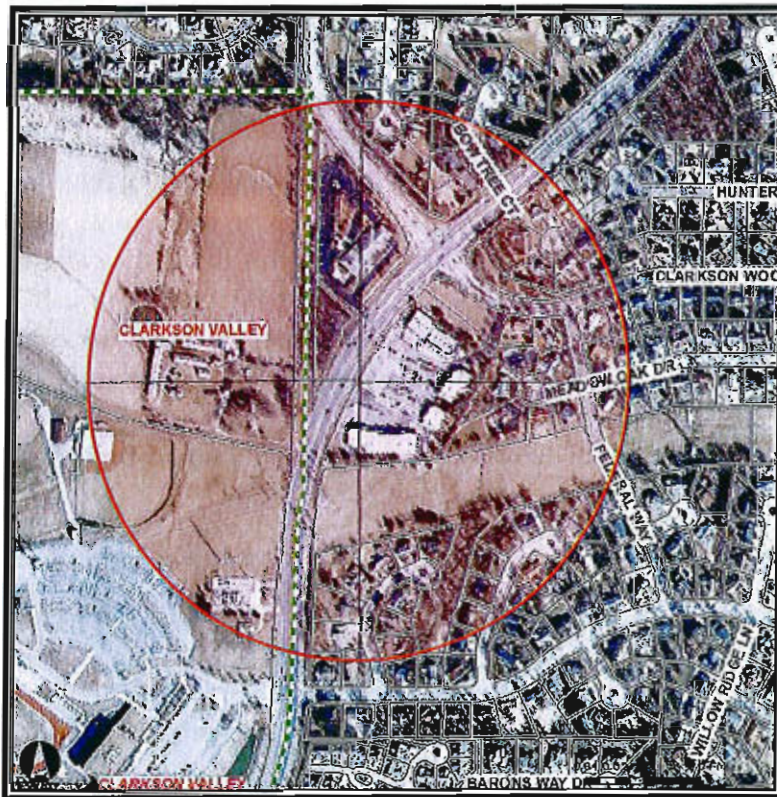
As stated in the applicant's letter to the Department, the site design of the development hinders the visibility of numerous tenant spaces. The applicant claims that the reduced visibility, coupled with an increasingly competitive retail environment, place the development at a disadvantage for tenant attraction and retention.

*c. What the proponent of such a sign believes the adverse impact may be upon the underlying business, directional, or informational purpose of such a sign if the proponent is compelled to reduce the height and/or outline area of such a sign to within the maximum height and/or outline area specification for any one (1) sign and the factual basis supporting such belief.*

Staff has worked with the applicant to reduce the size of the sign from the original intent by the developer. Based on discussions and meetings with Staff, the developer has worked with their sign company to develop a sign they believe provides the necessary visibility for the tenants of the development. The size of the tenant panels are designed based on the travel conditions along Clarkson Road (e.g. speed limit and roadway curvature). There are currently 20 tenants in the development. Based on the

outline area limitations and the number of tenants in the development, sign design that would allow for each tenant to have signage along Clarkson Road was not possible. In order to account for this limitation, the applicant is proposing a sign that is able to be manually rotated so that tenant signage can be oriented to both directions of travelers along Clarkson Road at different times. Based on discussions with the developer, rotation of the sign could be expected to occur 1-2 times per week.

- d. *The approximate distance the proposed sign will be from other existing or planned structures visible or planned to be visible within a radius of one thousand (1,000) feet from said sign, identifying such structures with sufficient particularity to enable the Planning Commission to determine whether there is a reasonable likelihood of an adverse public health, convenience, welfare and/or safety impact within the one thousand (1,000) foot radius area while maintaining the high aesthetic quality of said area.*



Only one non residential structure lies within 1,000 feet of the proposed sign at Clarkson Wilson Centre within the City of Chesterfield city limits. The mortuary site is zoned 'R-1' One Acre Residence District and is permitted under Conditional Use Permit #12. Conditional Use Permit #12 states that the site may have no more than one free-standing sign not to exceed six feet in height or 50 square feet in outline area.

Of the properties within Clarkson Valley, one is a large (39.7 acre) tract of land used for agricultural purposes and also contains a residential structure. The second property in the City of Clarkson Valley located within 1,000 feet of the proposed sign is Marquette High School.

There are several residential uses within the 1,000 foot radius. However, the location of proposed sign, the curvature of Clarkson Road, and the design of the shopping center limit the visibility of the sign from residential locations.

- e. *What steps, if any, the proponent has taken to integrate the design with the surrounding environment including, but not limited to, use of colors and materials, size and character of typeface(s), regularity of overall shape, type of illumination, orientation and situation of such a sign in order to minimize the amount of visual clutter, and to avoid the distraction to pedestrians and motorists beyond that necessary to convey the underlying business, information, or directional purpose of said sign.*

The sign is proposed to be a neutral tone color to blend in with the existing shopping center constructed on the site. The sign, similar to the building, will contain a teal accent color. Additionally, the sign includes a stone landscaping retaining wall. Staff has discussed the potential of removing the existing cap on the sign to reduce the height of the sign. While the developer did not dismiss the idea, they believe that the cap provides an architectural element to the sign that increases the attractiveness of the sign. The sign proposes to utilize backlight panels in accordance with the City of Chesterfield Lighting Ordinance.

It should be noted that visibility of the sign may be possible from a residential property immediately to the east of the development.



- f. If no steps (referred in item (e) above) have been taken, why such steps should not be required of the proponent.*

The applicant believes that the proposed sign has been designed to be compatible with the surrounding area and the existing shopping center.

- g. Any other information, such as length of frontage, special speed limit or topographic considerations, that the proponent deems pertinent to the approval of such a sign request.*

The subject site has over 700 feet of frontage along Clarkson Road. The curvature of Clarkson Road and the "U" shaped design of the shopping center limit the visibility of several of the tenants within the development. The applicant has provided a proposed solution to the visibility concerns of their tenants utilizing a proposed 100 square foot sign are (maximum permitted to be requested) while not requiring the maximum height. The proposed sign provides the desired visibility by including a sign that has the ability to be rotated.

#### **Location**

The sign is proposed to be located in the same location as the existing sign with a protrusion of the new sign into the parking lot. The increase in the width of the sign will require the removal of two parking spaces. Staff has reviewed the changes to the parking provided and verified that the center will still meet minimum parking requirements. If the sign size is approved, an Amended Site Development Plan will be required to be submitted for a complete review by the Department of Planning and Public Works.

#### **Landscaping**

The City of Chesterfield Zoning Ordinance Section 1003.168C requires that all free standing signs be landscaped. Proposed landscaping for the sign is attached to the end of this report. Plant materials proposed include Pink Vinca, Yellow Lantana, Liriope, and Scaevola.

#### **Comprehensive Plan**

The City of Chesterfield Comprehensive Plan includes several policies that relate to this request:

*Plan Policy 3.4 Signage Considerations: Signage along the I-64/US 40 corridor and State Highways should be evaluated in terms of height, size and location while recognizing individual uses' need for identity and visibility.*

*Plan Policy 3.4.1 Preserve Aesthetics and Public Safety: To preserve the high aesthetic quality and public safety interests along the corridor and other major highways/road, signs of ever-increasing size, brightness and garishness should be prohibited.*

**DEPARTMENTAL INPUT**

The submittal is in compliance with all applicable City of Chesterfield ordinances. The proposed increase in sign size and outline area seeks to allow for tenant signage to be located along the frontage of Clarkson Road to address the limited tenant visibility and increase tenant identification within the shopping center. While the sign is located on a state highway, the development also abuts several residential uses. The Zoning Ordinance allows for sign height to be measured from the average grade of the adjacent street, as is being utilized in this request (the height from the finished grade of the sign is 15 feet). Additionally, the impact of the sign on the residential area to the east of the site has not been addressed.

The Department of Planning and Public Works recommends that the increase in sign height and size not be approved. Under the sign regulations, a sign 9' 1" can be constructed on the site because of the grade differential between the site and the street. While the additional size will not increase options for providing tenant signage, the flexibility to increase the size of the existing size provides a mechanism for the property owner to increase the branding and marketing of the site as Clarkson Wilson Centre.

**MOTION**

The following options are provided to the Planning Commission for consideration relative to this application:

- 1) "I move to approve (or deny) the Sign Request for a free standing sign, 11 feet 11 inches in height with an outline area of 100 square feet for Clarkson Wilson Centre."
- 2) "I move to approve the Sign Request for a free standing sign, 11 feet 11 inches in height with an outline area of 100 square feet for Clarkson Wilson Centre with the following conditions....." (Conditions may be added, eliminated, altered or modified)

Respectfully submitted,



Justin Wyse  
Project Planner



Cc: City Administrator  
City Attorney  
Department of Planning, Public Works, and Parks  
Planning and Development Services Director

Attachments: Letter from the Petitioner  
Elevation of Proposed Sign  
Proposed Landscaping

# HUTKIN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

March 24, 2011

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Ms. Aimee Nassif  
Chesterfield City Hall  
690 Chesterfield, Pkwy W  
Chesterfield, MO 63017-0760



Re: ~ Clarkson Wilson Center – Monument Sign  
2 – 92 Clarkson Wilson Centre

Dear Ms. Nassif:

This letter represents Hutkin Development Company's submission as managing agent for and on behalf of Clarkson-Wilson Investors, L.L.C. to the Planning Commission for review and consideration of a new monument sign to replace the current sign at Clarkson Wilson Center located at 2 – 92 Clarkson Wilson Center.

The following items are enclosed with this letter:

- cover letter (4 copies)
- drawings of the upgraded monument sign (4 copies)
- site plan for the property (4 copies)
- site triangle drawing (4 copies)

The dimensions of the proposed new sign are: 15 feet in height and 12 feet in width. The sign face is 100 square feet. As measured per code, the height of the sign as measured from the average grade of Clarkson Road will be 11 feet 9 inches (11'9").

Initially, Clarkson Wilson Center intended to apply for a sign that would require a variance. However, in working closely with the Chesterfield Planning Department, the decision was made to limit the size of the sign in a way that would allow permission through the Planning Commission without requiring a variance.

The primary reasons for the proposed sign are as follows:

1. To update, upgrade, and generally enhance the aesthetic appearance of the sign, including incorporating an attractive landscaped bed and retaining wall surrounding the landscaping.

Ms. Aimee Nassif  
March 24, 2011  
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2. To incorporate tenant identification on the sign. The existing sign serves only as an identification sign for the center with no space for tenant names on either side of the sign. In an ever increasingly challenging economic and competitive environment among existing and new development in the area, it is more important than ever that we provide all reasonable support to all tenants. The quality appearance and image of the center is critical to retaining existing tenants and attracting new tenants, as well as attracting customers to the center and supporting tenant business success.

3. The existing low monument sign at Clarkson Wilson Center is dated and not consistent with the architectural design of the center.

4. The ownership has invested substantially in renovations, upgrade and improvements to the Clarkson Wilson Center buildings, parking lot, landscaping, and the enhancement of signage is an integral part of the overall upgrading of the center.

5. Clarkson Wilson Center's site plan limits visibility of the buildings and tenant signage in several key respects:

- The two buildings that are perpendicular to Clarkson Road have no exposure to traffic traveling from the opposite direction.
- The two buildings located on the easternmost portion of the site are set back at a distance of approximately 320 feet, and the tenant signage cannot be read from Clarkson Road at the speed traffic moves.
- The two perpendicular buildings obstruct the visibility of the easternmost buildings from south and northbound view from Clarkson Road.
- The center is located on the inside of the convex radius formed by Clarkson Road between Wilson Road and Country Ridge Drive. The road curvature coupled with the center's location at the crest of an incline limits the center's visibility as related to northbound traffic.

As economic and competitive needs have changed dramatically, these issues and deficiencies of the site have become an increasing hardship to existing tenants and a severe hardship to new leasing. These deficiencies has become even more of a threat to tenant retention and new leasing as competitive new developments have better overall center and tenant signage visibility.

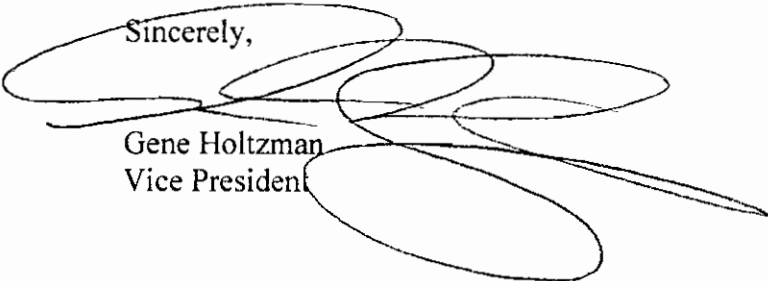
Ms. Aimee Nassif  
March 24, 2011  
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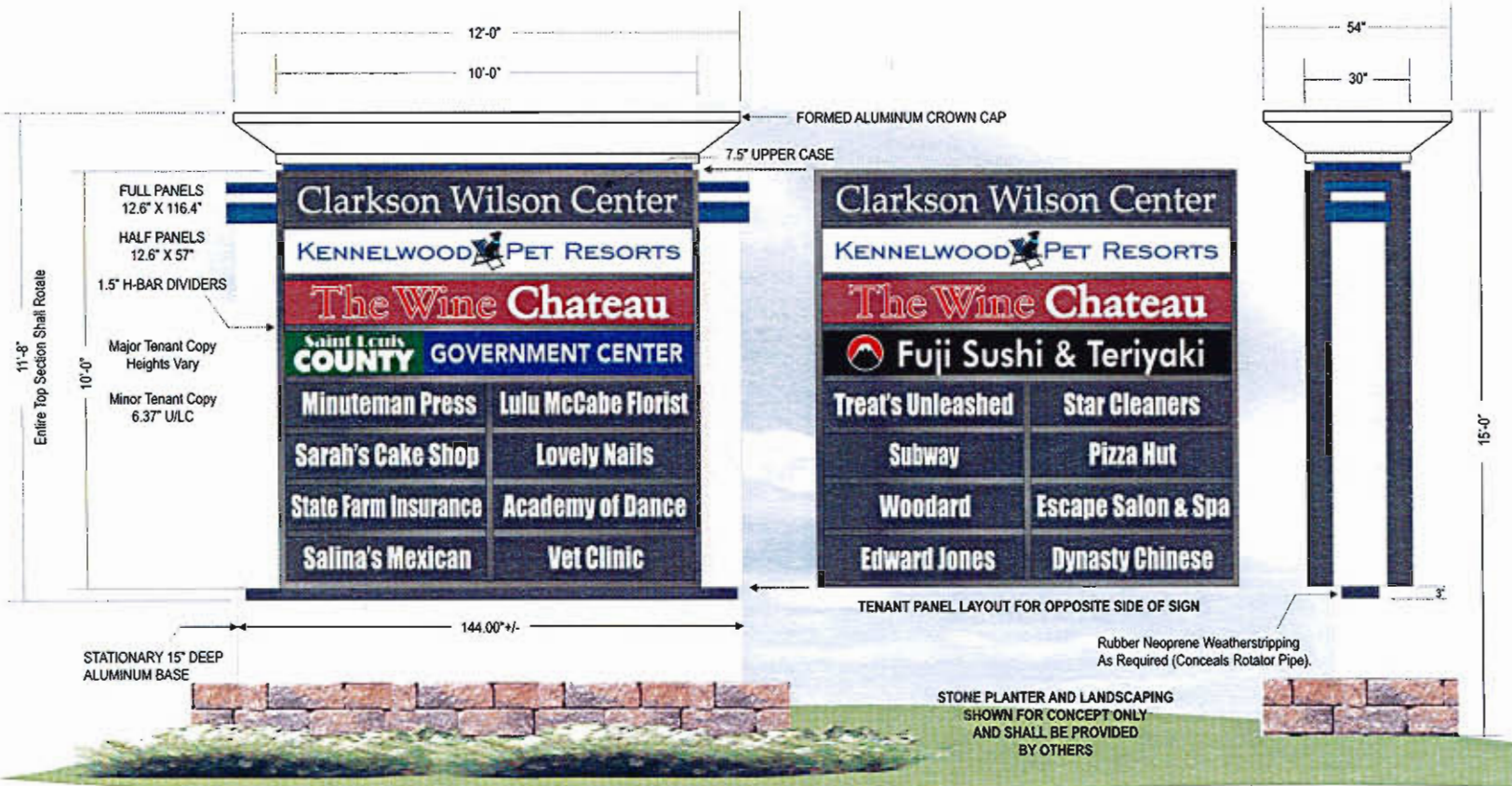
6. The property ownership and Hutkin Development Company, as managing agent, strongly believe that the new signage represents only a positive improvement. The proposed sign is more attractively designed than the existing sign; the addition of a landscape element enhances the sign setting, and both the site triangle analysis and Core-10 Architecture's review of the site and sign placement demonstrate that the proposed sign does not reduce or hinder visibility or traffic circulation.

The proposed sign will be located in the same location as the existing low monument sign. The new monument sign's location and size will not have an adverse impact on public health, convenience, welfare and/or safety within the 1,000 foot radius area. To all areas east of the center point of the radius, the sign will have no visibility to any neighboring commercial or residential properties. Further, the only visibility to the west, north, or south will be to Buchholz Mortuary at a distance of approximately 360 feet with no resulting view obstruction or impact to that property. In addition, we believe the design, color, and overall appeal of the proposed new sign maintains and, in fact, enhances, the aesthetic quality of the area.

Thank you and please let me know if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Gene Holtzman  
Vice President



**SIGN ELEVATION: 3/8" = 1'-0" (100 SF SIGN FACE AREA)**

HEIGHT OF SIGN AS MEASURED FROM AVERAGE GRADE OF CLARKSON ROAD IS 11'-9"

Furnish and install one double sided internally illuminated pylon sign.

30" deep aluminum cabinet. Tenant directory shall have 3/16" thick white acrylic faces decorated with 3M trans-vinyl film.

Illumination shall be by 800 MA fluorescent lamps and ballasts. Sign supported by a steel center mount pipe direct buried in a concrete footing

per engineer's specifications. Steel support to be concealed by an aluminum base/pole cover which shall have removable service access panels as required.

Sign painted with Dupont Chroma-One finishes (exact colors to be determined). COORDINATE PLACEMENT ON SITE.

NOTE: ENTIRE TOP SECTION OF SIGN SHALL BE SET UP FOR ROTATION WITH A MANUAL ROTATOR WHICH SHALL BE OPERABLE BY LANDLORD ALLOWING TENANT EXPOSURE TO PERIODICALLY CHANGE ON QUARTERLY PER ANNUM BASIS AS REQUIRED.

- SW 6070 HERON PLUME
- SW 6769 MAXI TEAL
- 3M 230-69 DURANODIC

**WARRENSIGN**  
 2165 Arnold Tenbrook Rd.  
 St. Louis, MO 63110  
 P: 636-282-1300 F: 636-282-3385

CLIENT  
 HUTKIN  
 PROJECT  
 CLARKSON WILSON CENTER  
 LOCATION  
 CHESTERFIELD, MO  
 SCALE  
 NOTED  
 DATE  
 10/7/09  
 SAVED AS  
 CLARKSON WILSON MONUMENT  
 DRAWING NO  
 JK 100309  
 REVISED  
 3/29/11  
 DESIGNED BY  
 Keith Hempen



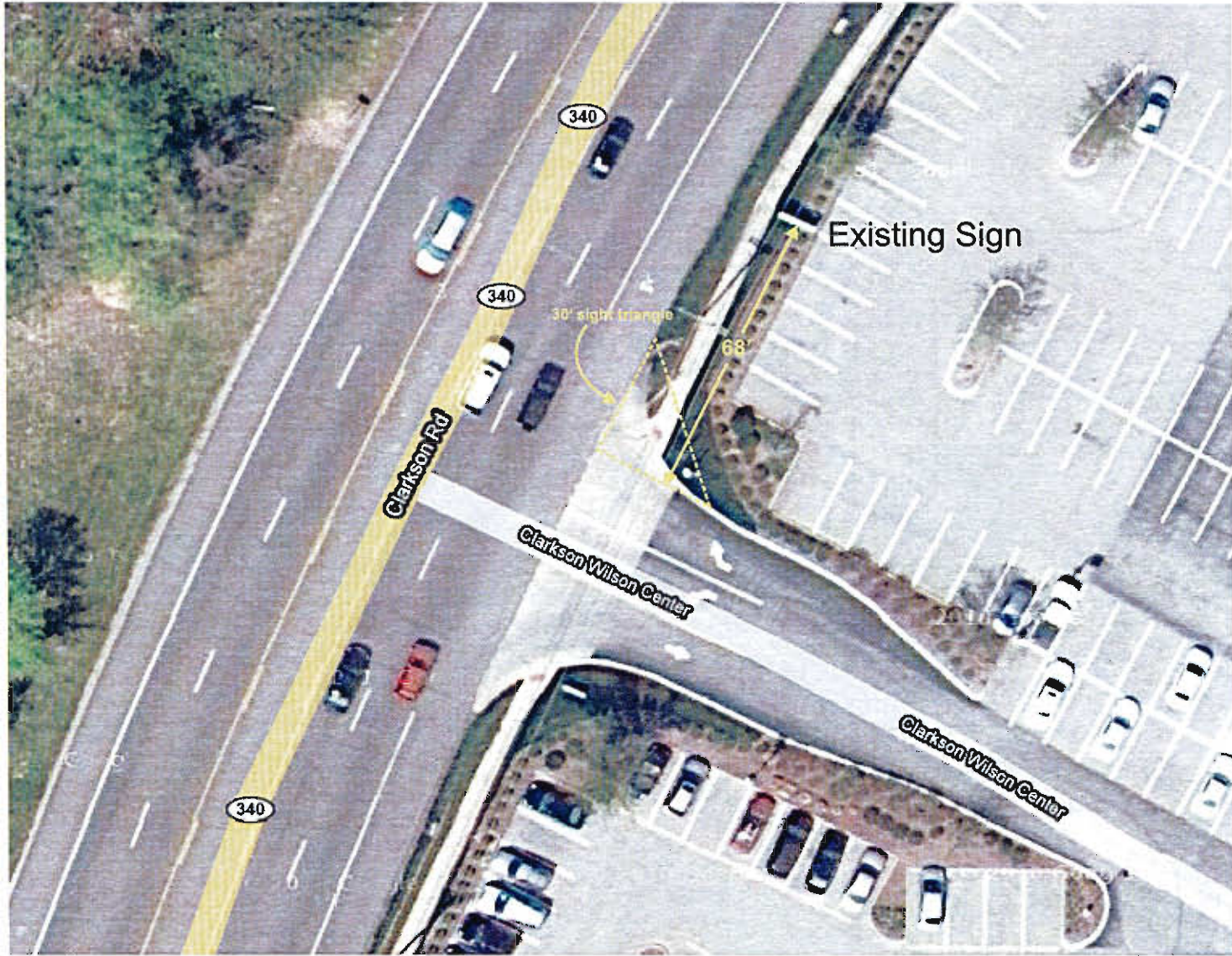
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# Clarkson Wilson Center

Sign/Site Overview  
30' Sight Triangle  
Observed.



2/8/11

Warren Sign  
Jon Krone  
636.282.1300



Conceptual View  
Placed At Existing Sign Location.

Note: Sign Will Impede Parking Area.  
Planter/Landscaping Work Required.



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CLIENT  
HUTKIN  
PROJECT  
CLARKSON WILSON CENTER  
LOCATION  
CHESTERFIELD, MO  
SCALE  
NOTED  
DATE  
3/16/11  
SAVED AS  
CLARKSON WILSON CONCEPTUAL VIEW  
DRAWING NO.  
JK 100309 CV  
REVISED  
DESIGNED BY  
Keith Hempen



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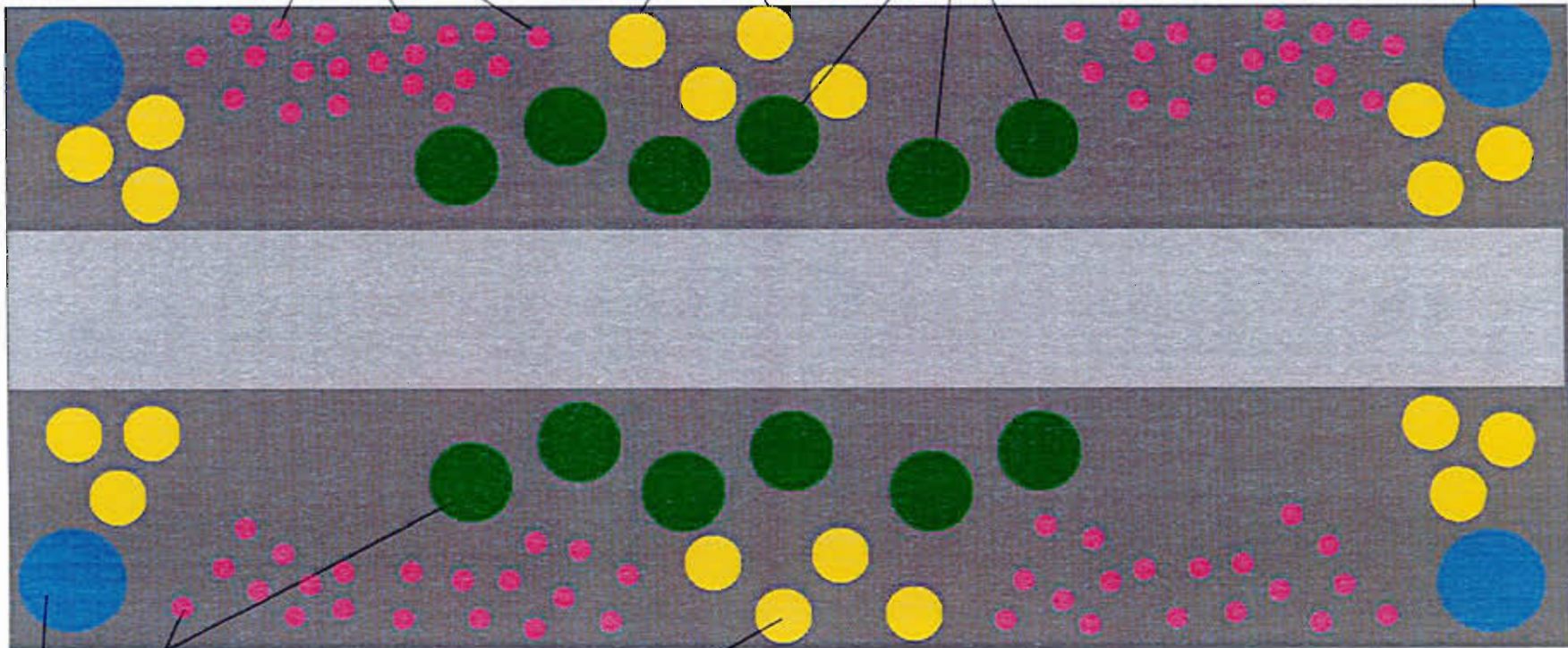
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(6) flats of  
Pink Vinca

(40) 4" Yellow  
Lantana

(12) 1 gal.  
Liriope

(4) 10" Scaevola  
or Million Bells



**CLARKSON WILSON CENTRE  
PROPOSED LANDSCAPING FOR  
MONUMENT SIGN**

