7.A.XX SIGN DESIGN OPTION

A. Purpose Statement

1. The Sign Design Option is intended to provide sign design flexibility and alternatives to the regulations noted elsewhere in this Code. It provides an Applicant the opportunity to design a unique, comprehensive Plan for all exterior permanent signs located on one premise, or a single sign that is part of an integrated architectural feature, or a single sign that is new, being replaced, or is non-conforming and will be brought into closer conformance to these Sign standards.
2. This Option is intended to provide a procedure to allow signage which is not in strict compliance with the provisions of the regulations of the underlying sign zone, but which are found, through the review process, to be appropriate to the character of the development, provides adequate identification and information, provides a good visual environment, promotes traffic safety, and is regulated to the extent necessary to be consistent with the purpose and intent of these Sign Standards.
3. It is further an opportunity to maximize the sign message to facilitate driver and pedestrian comprehension, while minimizing sign clutter and distraction.

B. Comprehensive Plan:

1. An Applicant can earn modifications in specific sign parameters such as height, area, and setback by adhering to design feature criteria noted in this Section. The Applicant may submit a Comprehensive Plan for all signs contained on one premise, or a single sign design option for a new or existing sign. The applicant must demonstrate that utilization of the Sign Design Option will make a positive contribution toward meeting the City of Tucson's Sign Standards Purpose Statement noted in Section 7A.1.1, and the design criteria "Findings" as itemized in this section.

2. The Premise Plan will include all signs that are intended to be seen from a public right of way or private street, including ground mounted, wall, and portable signs.

3. Sign Standards that cannot be revised using the Sign Design Option include:
   a. The Outdoor Lighting Code
   b. Electronic Sign message change rate or permitted zones.
   c. Prohibited Signs, Section 7A.8.2
   d. Permanent Signs Zone Category Standards 7A.10.2.A, Table 1 - Zones, Categories, and Permanent Sign Types

C. Process:

1. The Application may be submitted before, after, or concurrently with a Rezoning, Special Exception, or Development Plan. Signs that are part of the Sign Design Option will require individual permits prior to construction.

2. Decision: The Sign Design Review Committee will review the Application and make a recommendation to the Planning Commission, which will make a final recommendation to the PDSD Director. The Director's decision may be to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application. The Director will base the decision on compliance with the Sign Standards Purpose Statement, Findings, and other applicable design standards identified through the review process.

3. Appeal: An Applicant may appeal the Director's decision to the Board of Adjustment in accordance with Section 3.10.2 and further to the Mayor and Council in accordance with Section 3.9.2 (Mayor and Council Appeal Procedure).

D. Suggested Resources to assist in determining the Applicant's Sign Design Option include but are not limited to those noted in A.7.1.E.2.c "Sign Design Elements."

E. Design Standards

1. Location: All signs will be placed where they are sufficiently visible and readable for their function. Factors to be considered shall include the purpose of the sign, its location relative to traffic movement, arterial or collector street designation, site features and topography, existing and proposed structures, and sign orientation relative to viewing distances and angles.

2. Quantity: The number of signs that may be approved within any development shall be no greater than that required to provide project identification, entry signs, and business identification. Factors to be considered shall include the size of the development, the number of development sub-areas, and the division or integration of sign functions.

3. Height, Area, Setbacks: All signs shall be no larger than necessary for visibility and readability. Factors to be considered in determining appropriate size shall include topography, volume of traffic, speed of traffic, visibility range, proximity to adjacent uses, amount of sign copy, placement of the sign, lettering style, and the presence of potential distractions. In no event shall the Plan contain a ground or wall sign which exceeds by more than fifty percent (50%) any maximum height standard, or by twenty-five percent (25%) any maximum area standard, or by twenty-five percent (25%) the setback requirements pertaining to the particular sign zone where the development is located.
4. Materials: Sign structure materials shall be compatible with the architectural materials being used for the development. In the case of a single sign, the materials will be compatible with those that already exist in the structure(s) for which the sign will be used. Colors of the sign materials, if the sign is internally or externally lit, will be those that have been identified by the astronomy industry as being minimally impacting on Dark Skies.
5. Illumination shall meet all requirements of the Outdoor Lighting Code. Internally lit signs will have a dark background color that does not allow light to be emitted when lit.
6. Color: Background color for freestanding signs will be uniform when backing elements of the sign identifying tenants or services.
7.

F. Findings

The proposed sign(s)

1. Meets the Purpose Statement of these sign regulations in general, and the Purpose Statement noted in Section A of this Sign Design Option.
2. Creates a clear connection with the forms, massing, textures, colors and materials used in the design of the buildings located on the premise.
3. Is proportional to the scale of the building /complex which it identifies.
4. Is integrated into the architectural design of the building near, or on which, it is placed.
5. Improves the legibility of the sign, and the reaction time of the driver, with respect to the category of street on which the sign is located (arterial, collector, local).
6. Comprehensively organizes the site signs to facilitate wayfinding and improve safety.
7. Protects significant scenic views and other environmental assets.
8. Reduces visual clutter along the street.
9. Enhances the aesthetics of the street and the building /complex.
10. Conforms with the Outdoor Lighting Code and the Best Practices Standards identified by the Dark Skies interests.