Daniel Bursuck - support of City of Tucson Sign Code Revision Project

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Date:	01/13/2017 12:19 PM
Subject:	support of City of Tucson Sign Code Revision Project
Cc:	"ggegenheimer@tucsonchamber.org" <ggegenheimer@tucsonchamber.org>, "dani...
Attachments:	MPA-CHAMBER Sign Code Revision Letter final.pdf

I am writing this letter in support of City of Tucson Sign Code Revision Project revisions attached by The Tucson Metro Chamber and Metropolitan Pima Alliance (MPA).

Please contact me if any questions.

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January 3, 2017

Ms. Lynne Birkinbine, Interim Director
Planning and Development Services
201 North Stone Avenue, 3rd Floor
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Dear Ms. Birkinbine,

The Tucson Metro Chamber and Metropolitan Pima Alliance (MPA) jointly represent hundreds of businesses both large and small within the City of Tucson. Both organizations are advocates in creating commerce and development to support a high quality of life. As representatives of existing and future businesses, the Metro Chamber and MPA have actively been working with staff and participating in the Sign Code subcommittee meetings in an effort to address critical existing issues that are unnecessary roadblocks to business owners. Through this process, we feel that the conversation has not adequately taken our ideas and concerns into account. Collectively, members and staff within both of our organizations have spent hundreds of hours reviewing the ordinance and providing recommendations that streamline the process while not diluting the effectiveness and intent of the Ordinance. We have identified 11 key areas that we would like to focus on. Some of these are simply statements of support, while others are requests for modifications.

1.) **Page 21 / 7A.6 MEASUREMENTS, LOCATION AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS / 7A.6.4 SIGN COPY**

Current Language: *"C. Electronic sign copy is permitted to scroll not more than once an hour."*

Recommendation:

- Stakeholders recommend that electronic signs are permitted to change and operate according to the Arizona Department of Transportation standards.
- This recommendation also applies to comment JM97 on page 30 under 7A.8 EXEMPT AND PROHIBITED SIGNS.

2.) **Page 21 / 7A.6 MEASUREMENTS, LOCATION AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS / 7A.6.5 SIGN HEIGHT MEASUREMENT**

Current Language: *"The sign height is measured as the vertical distance from the average finished grade beneath the sign to the topmost feature of the sign; except that if the sign location has an average finished grade lower than the adjoining grade of the road, the sign height is measured from the top of the curb (or crown of the road nearest the property if no curb exists) to the topmost feature of the sign. Average finished grade refers to the mean average elevation of ground after site preparation*

at the bottom of a sign structure, measured five feet from the bottom of the sign structure at five-foot intervals."

Recommendation:

- Stakeholders are in support of the proposed revisions and encourage that this section be approved in its current form.

3.) Page 24 / 7A.6 MEASUREMENTS, LOCATION AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS / 7A.6.11 PREMISE

Current Language: *"A premise is all contiguous land used and occupied by a use or business. All buildings, parking, storage and service areas, and private roads or driveways that are an integral part of the use or business are considered part of the premise. Commercial shopping centers, office complexes, commercial or industrial subdivisions, or similar developments are a premise to the extent such lands are identified as a single site that may contain one or multiple development plans or packages."*

Recommendation:

- Stakeholders are in support of the proposed statement, however this section should be moved to 7A.3 (DEFINITIONS), which starts on page 3.
- The other option is to simply reference this section in the definitions (e.g. Premises: see Sec. 7A.6.11).

4.) Page 24 / 7A.6 MEASUREMENTS, LOCATION AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS / 7A.6.12 ILLUMINATION

Current Language: *"Unless otherwise prohibited in ~~this~~ these sign standards ~~code~~, all signs may be illuminated subject to the provisions of Tucson Code, Chapter 6, Article IV, Division 2, "Outdoor Lighting Code."*

Recommendation:

- Remove the statement "Unless otherwise prohibited in these sign standards" so that the section reads as follows:
  "All signs may be illuminated subject to the provisions of Tucson Code, Chapter 6, Article IV, Division 2, "Outdoor Lighting Code."

5.) Page 25 / 7A.7 SIGN DESIGN OPTIONS / 7A.7.1 MASTER SIGN PROGRAM—PERMANENT SIGNS / E. DESIGN STANDARDS / 1. ALL SIGNS

Current Language: *"Illuminated colors shall be predominantly those colors that reduce light trespass and offer protection to dark skies in compliance with the City's outdoor lighting standards.*
A sign with lists of categories, tenants or organizations or similar listed items within panels or separately mounted sign copy, shall have behind the copy, i.e. words, names, numbers or symbols using a specific logo or federally registered trademark colors a unifying and proportional outlining background color;
For a sign with lists, the sign panels and/or the separately mounted sign copy, i.e., sign copy mounted without panels on a structure or wall, it shall be mounted or placed so as to be reasonably proportional in size."

Recommendation:

- Stakeholders recommend that E.1 be removed in its entirety.

Justification:

- City should be a proponent of good design, however they should not be designing.
- This section is redundant and lacks clarity. As previously stated per Code, all signs have to be compliant with the Outdoor Lighting Code.
- The dark background requirement penalizes the applicant and limits them when they want to be using their logos, copyrights, etc. Therefore, this requirement should be removed.

6.) Page 26 / 7A.7 SIGN DESIGN OPTIONS / 7A.7.1 MASTER SIGN PROGRAM—PERMANENT SIGNS / E. DESIGN STANDARDS / 2. GROUND-MOUNTED SIGNS / b. SIGN HEIGHT

Current Language: *"The sign height and sign structure setback for a freestanding sign should be at a height and distance from the right of way to be easily detectable and give a vehicle a reasonable time to adjust to traffic conditions.*
The sign height shall be compatible with the surrounding building height profile of the property and surrounding area. The sign structure shall not obstruct significant scenic views from the right of way.
The height of the sign copy shall not be set so as not to be obstructed by landscaping or a parked vehicle."

Recommendation:

- Freestanding Signs – The Master Sign Program should include a cap regarding height. Stakeholders believe this cap should be an increase of 100%.

7.) Page 26 / 7A.7 SIGN DESIGN OPTIONS / 7A.7.1 MASTER SIGN PROGRAM—PERMANENT SIGNS / E. DESIGN STANDARDS / 2. GROUND-MOUNTED SIGNS / c. SIGN DESIGN ELEMENTS / 1. STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

Current Language: *"A freestanding sign is to be comprised of design elements consisting of a bottom, middle and top component. A sign blending wall and ground mounted components may use the best practice option noted below.*
The design context of the components shall use the architectural style of the development being identified. Features to be used in designing the components include colors, materials, textures and shapes of the development's architecture. The bottom component shall be designed with a monument-style base."

Recommendation:

- Clarification is needed regarding top, middle, and bottom of signs. Examples should be provided for clarification.

8.) Page 35 / 7A.10 SIGN TYPES AND GENERAL STANDARDS / 7A.10.1 GENERALLY PERMITTED SIGNS / B. INTERIOR SIGNS

Current Language: "*Interior Sign Exception: A sign within a premise, such as a menu board, that has a two-way communication mechanism must be set back at least*

thirty feet from a residence or residential zone. A wall-mounted permanent or portable sign, that is within a premise's boundaries, outside a building or enclosed area, viewable from the right of way, and has a sign area greater than twelve square feet, is counted as part of the applicable sign type's maximum sign area."

Recommendation:

- Stakeholders are in support of the proposed changes, but with the following revisions:
  - Change statement from "...that has a two-way communication mechanism must be set back at least thirty feet from a residence or residential zone" to "must be set back at least twenty feet from residential zone"
  - Clarification is needed to state this exception is not applicable to drive-thru signs.
  - Interior Signs – needs to state that inside the building and interior signs to premise shall not be counted against the maximum sign area.

9.) Page 38 / 7A.10 SIGN TYPES AND GENERAL STANDARDS / 7A.10.3 PERMANENT SIGNS—MAXIMUM SIGN AREA AND SPECIAL ZONE STANDARDS PER ZONE CATEGORY

Current Language: (See Table 2 on page 38)

Recommendation for Table 2 -- Residential section:

- If on an arterial/collector street, signs are allowed to match the business center.
- If on a residential street, signs stay as is.

Recommendation for Table 2 -- Non-residential section:

- 6. Illumination and Color- remove language that details the use of "low pressure sodium lighting."

10.) Page 42 / 7A.10.4 PERMANENT SIGNS—ADDITIONAL SIGN TYPE STANDARDS / SECTION 4- CANOPY SIGNS

Current Language:

- *a. Maximum number of faces: Canopy signs shall have one (1) face per sign; they shall not be a double faced sign.*
- *b. Maximum number.*
  - *One (1) per tenant for each tenant elevation up to one hundred fifty (150) feet in length. Two (2) per tenant for each tenant elevation over one hundred fifty (150) feet in length.*
- *c. Maximum size: The vertical measure of the sign face shall not exceed eighteen (18) inches except for individual letters with descenders that are proportionate to the remaining text but in no case larger than six (6) inches. The horizontal measure of the sign face shall not exceed seventy five percent (75%) of that for the building or tenant elevation that backs the canopy sign and shall not exceed the width of the canopy to which it is attached.*
- *d. Maximum height: The top of the canopy sign shall be no more than two (2) feet above the top surface of the canopy directly below the canopy sign, and no more than fifteen (15) feet in height above finished grade immediately below the canopy sign.*

The wall behind the canopy sign shall be vertical and at least six (6) feet higher than the top of the canopy sign, or the angle from horizontal formed by a line connecting the top of the canopy sign and the top of the wall backing the canopy sign shall be no less than twenty (20) degrees.
Canopy signs that do not exceed the height of the roof or parapet wall immediately behind the canopy sign but not in compliance with 3-59.C.2.b or .c the provision noted above may be considered as integrated architectural features.

- *e. Float: The bottom of a canopy sign (excluding descenders) shall be placed directly on the top surface of the canopy directly below the canopy sign.*
- *f. Location: Within twenty (20) feet of the building wall that backs the canopy sign.*
- *g. Maximum projection: Canopy signs shall not project from the canopy facia unless the sign copy includes descenders, in which case canopy signs may project up to six (6) inches from the facia.*
- *h. Maximum recess: Canopy signs may be recessed up to a maximum of six (6 inches from the facia of the canopy.*
- *i. Orientation: The face of the canopy sign shall be vertical and shall be parallel to the building wall that backs it except if it is affixed to a horizontally curved or other irregularly shaped canopy and no individual letter is angled more than twenty-five (25) degrees from the building wall.*
- *j. Canopy signs are not permitted on any canopy elevation that also has a wall sign on the canopy.*

Recommendation:

- Remove 4C through 4I.
- Language should state that canopy signs are allowed and cannot extend beyond the roofline.

Justification: This section makes the code too convoluted, and many of these will cause variances which are unnecessary and will increase costs.

11.) Page 44-45 / 7A.10.4 PERMANENT SIGNS—ADDITIONAL SIGN TYPE STANDARDS / FREESTANDING SIGNS, ALL TYPES

Current Language: *"One freestanding sign for each street frontage.*
One additional freestanding sign on that street frontage for each additional one hundred fifty (150) feet of street frontage in excess of the first three hundred (300) feet. For each sign placed on the frontage of a local street, the total allowable number of freestanding signs for the arterial or collector street frontage shall be reduced by one."

Recommendation:

- Stakeholders are in support of this section as written.

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We appreciate the extensive amount of time the City staff and Commission members have spent in working to revise this Ordinance. We support staff's efforts and we ask you to strongly consider the proposed changes above. We look forward to seeing the final product of the Sign Code as something that is equitable, comprehensive, and inclusive of the business community.

Sincerely,

Robert Medler
Vice President, Government Affairs
Tucson Metro Chamber

Amber Smith, MPA
Executive Director
Metropolitan Pima Alliance

CC: Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
Mr. Michael Ortega
City of Tucson City Council