

July 11th, 2017

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President & CEO:
Lea Márquez Peterson

TO: City of Tucson Planning Commission Members

RE: Tucson Sign Code Revision

On behalf of Tucson Hispanic Chamber's (THCC) current and future member businesses located within the City of Tucson and landowners working to attract businesses to our City, we offer the following background, information and recommendations. The THCC has been following this issue and has gone on record.

The THCC advocates for the end of unnecessary over-regulation, particularly of small businesses. We believe Tucson and our business citizens deserve to have a strong, balanced, business-friendly sign code, one that makes us competitive with other recruiting cities. Our proximity to Mexico and bicultural business environment is an asset for business and we need sufficient signs to direct customers and tourists. Additionally, Signs are an essential tool of business operations, just as personnel, for sale products, services, and facilities.

The business community has had a long-standing and on-going engagement advocating for updates and changes to the City of Tucson Sign Code. Tucson has unique physical attributes and culture which influence policy and regulation. There is an opportunity for a more balanced and business friendly sign code respectful of this context.

The current City of Tucson Sign Code challenges Tucson's efforts to support, and retain local businesses as well as attract new businesses and employers.

The City of Tucson Sign Code Ordinance was enacted July 6, 1987, Ord. 6737, and much of the ordinance has remained unchanged. It needs to be brought current.

- U.S. Supreme Court Decision Reed et al v Town of Gilbert, Arizona was decided on June 18, 2015. It will take some time for the approximately 19,505 incorporated cities and towns in the U.S. and 3,144 counties in the U.S. to evaluate and update their sign codes. "Content-neutrality" is a term that will continue to be refined as sign code ordinances are updated. There is urgency, but also time to get our sign code right.
- On August 9, 2016 the recommendation to update the Tucson sign code included the broad direction to staff of making practical changes to modernize the code, improve quality of design and flexibility of the overall code, grounded in technical standards. This is a perfect opportunity to make the appropriate changes and updates to our sign code.

The Tucson Sign Code Revision established a process where there was a primary working group with other stakeholders able to provide limited input. The business community was not part of the primary working group.

From inception, members of the business community participated via public comment periods in the Tucson Sign Code revision process, as allowed, formally and informally, raising general and specific concerns and providing general and specific recommendations.

Tucson's existing and future business community is extremely diverse with needs that cover the full range of sign size, quantity, type and location. With several small, but meaningful business-focused edits to the June 2, 2017 draft, the THCC believes our sign code can help Tucson businesses succeed, and aid in business retention and recruitment of new employers.

Sincerely,



Lea Márquez Peterson, MBA, IOM
President/CEO
Tucson Hispanic Chamber

Douglas
Hispanic
Chamber of Commerce
AN AFFILIATE OF THE TUCSON HISPANIC CHAMBER

Ambos
Nogales
Hispanic
Chamber of Commerce
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Sierra Vista
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