



Grand Canyon Chapter • Rincon Group
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November 21, 2016

Joint Planning Commission & Citizen Sign Code Committee Subcommittee on Sign Code Revision
c/o City of Tucson Planning & Development Services
Public Works Building, 3rd Floor
201 North Stone Avenue
Tucson, Arizona 85701

RE: Substance & Pace of Sign Code Revision Project

Dear Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Sign Code Revision:

The Sierra Club Rincon Group (southern Arizona) supports a quality visual environment in both rural and urban settings and this support is well grounded in longstanding Sierra Club policy. Many decades ago, the national Sierra Club adopted a series of policies regarding strict controls on billboards and our state chapter (Grand Canyon) has lobbied in the state legislature for decades against proposed legislation that would compromise Arizona's visual environment. In addition, the national Sierra Club filed an amicus brief, at the Rincon Group's urging, in the successful litigation that upheld the ban on electronic billboards found in the Arizona Highway Beautification Act.

In light of the foregoing, the Rincon Group has significant concerns with the sign code revisions being proposed for the City of Tucson. The sheer magnitude of the draft revisions requires far more public scrutiny than is possible with a series of rapid-fire weekly meetings, held in the afternoon when most working citizens cannot attend. In addition, the 80-page draft is difficult for well-versed professionals to comprehend, let alone the average citizen. What can be divined from the draft, however, is that the proposed changes would represent a major weakening and deregulation of signage controls and go far beyond addressing last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision on temporary signs in Gilbert (Arizona). The additional changes would go far beyond the smokescreen of code "simplification" and streamlined processes that are cited in City Staff reports.

Many in our southern Arizona membership of 4,000 still has keen memories of the infamy that was brought to Tucson in 1970 with the Life Magazine centerfold that declared Speedway as the "ugliest street in America". It is clear that adoption of this draft would lead us far back in that direction, particularly with the multiple gimmicks that would provide for signs that are far larger and taller than any allowed since the 1970's. The Rincon Group rejects this direction and urges that the Subcommittee truly act to represent the citizens of the Tucson community by limiting the scope its work to the minimum changes necessary to address the U.S. Supreme Court case.

Sincerely,

Meg Weesner
Sierra Club Rincon Group Chair



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