

September 15, 2017

The Honorable Jonathan Rothschild  
City of Tucson Mayor  
255 W. Alameda, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701

**RE: Sign Code Revision Project**

Dear Mayor Rothschild,

Since the Mayor and Council voted to proceed with the Sign Code Revision Project in August 2016, the Tucson Metro Chamber has actively participated in every step of the process, along with other organizations and members of the business community. We attended every Citizen Sign Code/Planning Commission joint subcommittee meeting—as well as the meetings held by each commission on its own, submitted several letters to staff, held numerous stakeholder meetings, and have listened to the needs of representatives from various sectors.

The Chamber represents 1,500 businesses in the metro area and is an advocate for development and commerce in Tucson. Our primary goal from the beginning was to identify and address existing issues that pose unnecessary barriers to business owners. Through this process, we feel that the conversation has not adequately taken our ideas and concerns into account.

We understand the time frame for public comment and language suggestions has ended, but we continue to find unresolved issues in the Sign Code that negatively impact the business community. Several of these are outlined below as per the most recent draft (August 18, 2017):

- **Page 9, 7A.6.3**
  - This section on Change of Copy is punitive and presents unnecessary hardships to small businesses. If, for example, a business were to change its sign from “Joe’s Diner” to “Jack’s Restaurant” but keep the rest of the sign entirely the same, that business owner should not be subjected to a lengthy and potentially costly process for that small of a modification.
- **Page 13, 7A.7.1A and Page 16, 7A.7.1G**
  - On page 16, section 7A.7.1G, we suggest cleaning up and consolidating the language for the findings under ‘Master Sign Program- Permanent Signs.’
  - We would also like to suggest emphasizing economic development in the purpose on page 13 for consistency.
  - Please see attached language change request
- **Page 50, 2.2.12.C**
  - We do not see the need for both a general neighborhood association representative *and* an ad hoc neighborhood association representative who lives within 300 feet of a project. We would suggest that the former be removed.
  - Please see attached language change request

- **Page 55, 10.3.7C**
  - On page 55, section 10.3.7, we suggest removing number one under letter C entirely, as this poses hardships on businesses that deal with commercial real estate. Enforcement of this statement devalues the property and can potentially make it less attractive to future buyers or renters.
  - In most cases, *36 months* would likely give the owner enough time to settle all issues before the sign is discontinued, which is another possible edit for this section if number one is not removed entirely.
  - Please see attached language change request
- **Other**
  - After 12 months of implementing the new Sign Code, we request a formal public stakeholder review process to address any unresolved issues or underlying concerns, of which we are able to directly participate. We request that this review process conclude by the sunset date.

We are appreciative of the time that the Mayor, Councilmembers, City Manager and City staff have dedicated to meeting with the business community regarding the Sign Code Revision Project. We are confident that these conversations will continue in the months following the adoption of the revised Code. Our goal as a community should be to have a Sign Code that is equitable, business-friendly, meets lighting and dark sky requirements, and addresses the need for signs as part of economic development and growth. We look forward to working with the City of Tucson to promote effective, well-designed signage that attracts visitors and future employers while sustaining the businesses and residents already here.

Respectfully,



Grace Gegenheimer  
Government Affairs Manager  
Tucson Metro Chamber

Attachment: Sign Code (8-19-2017 draft) Language Change Requests

CC: Mr. Michael Ortega  
Tucson City Councilmembers

## LANGUAGE CHANGE REQUESTS

### 7.A.7.1. MASTER SIGN PROGRAM – PERMANENT SIGNS

A. Purpose: The purpose of this section is to respond to special permanent sign needs of a premise as well as provide flexibility, encourage **economic** development in accordance with adopted plans and policies and promote superior sign design to implement the purpose of this article.

#### G. Findings

**1. The decision should show how the sign program addresses site specific standards as may be applicable, below:**

a. The **intent and** purpose of Article 7.A., Section 7A.7.1.A., the master sign program’s purpose, and Section 7A.7.1.E., the master sign program’s design standards;

b. Promotes a well-organized visual environment through appropriate sizes, number, setbacks and spacing;

c. **Acknowledges the site context and coordinates permanent signs with the architecture of buildings on the premise through use of proportional and compatible shapes, textures, colors and materials;** (Combines b and c of Aug. 18 draft)

d. **Emphasizes public safety through sign legibility, sign lighting, wayfinding, identification and messaging and provides for appropriate vehicle reaction time to signs;** (Combines d, e, and f of Aug. 18 draft)

e. **Complies with the Outdoor Lighting Code**

### 2.2.12 SIGN DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

#### C. Composition:

The committee shall be composed of the following ~~nine~~ **eight** members who shall serve without compensation. Members shall include an architect, an Outdoor Lighting Committee representative, a sign industry representative, a ~~local business representative~~ **general business association representative**, a planner (architect, land use planner or landscape architect), portable sign expert (e.g. commercial real estate broker), one at-large appointment by the City Manager, ~~general neighborhood association representative~~, and an ad-hoc representative appointed by a neighborhood association within 300 feet of the location of the subject property submitting the application. The City Manager may appoint a professional or stakeholder with a similar background and/or experience to the above listed committee members.

ARTICLE 10: ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES – SIGN VIOLATIONS, ENFORCEMENT, PENALTIES

C. Abandoned and discontinued signs; obsolete sign copy

1. ~~Nonconforming signs: Any nonconforming sign or nonconforming sign structure that is either discontinued for a period of six months or abandoned shall be removed by the owner of the sign or owner of the premises~~

*or*

Nonconforming signs: Any nonconforming sign or nonconforming sign structure that is either discontinued for a period of ~~six~~ **thirty-six (36)** months or abandoned shall be removed by the owner of the sign or owner of the premises