

Item

Consider amendments (ZCA-32) to the City of Tulsa Zoning Code to add provisions for Electronic Message Centers (EMC) in the following sections: Section 60.040 Sign Regulations of General Applicability, add new Section 60.040-G Electronic Message Center Signs; and Section 95.220 Terms Beginning with "S", Sign, Dynamic Display and add new definition for Sign, Electronic Message Center

Background

The City of Tulsa Zoning Code was updated in 2016. The previous zoning code included provisions for both dynamic displays and electronic message centers (EMCs). Dynamic displays are defined as elements of a sign that display words, symbols, figures, images, or messages that can be electronically or mechanically changed by remote or automatic means. EMCs are more limited by only allowing the display of letters or numbers. The Code adopted in 2016 maintained provisions for dynamic displays, but the definition and regulations for EMCs were not carried forward. This omission resulted in all digital displays as a component of a sign being classified as a "dynamic display".

EMCs can be utilized to present text or numbers as a static message without frequent transitions which can be useful for the purpose of displaying certain information such as the time, temperature, or price information. The most common application for these signs has been the display of gas prices as fuel stations transition from manual, changeable copy signs, to digital displays.

The proposed change to the Tulsa Zoning Code would add a definition for electronic message centers (EMCs) and provide supplemental regulations to ensure appropriate size, location, and brightness standards; separate from the provisions for dynamic displays.

A business representative contacted Councilor Lakin who agreed to sponsor the item for Council consideration to add proposed amendments related to electronic message centers in the City of Tulsa Zoning Code. The City Council initiated the proposed amendments on October 30, 2024.

Staff Recommendation

Approval of the proposed amendments to the City of Tulsa Zoning Code as shown in the attachment

Attachment

- Proposed amendments to the City of Tulsa Zoning Code, Title 42 Tulsa Revised Ordinances, shown in ~~strike through~~/underline

Chapter 60 | Signs

Section 60.040 Sign Regulations of General Applicability

60.040-G Electronic Message Center Signs

Electronic message center signs shall be permitted in SR, MX, O, C, and I districts, and shall be subject to the regulations that apply to on-premise wall, projecting, and freestanding signs within the applicable zoning district, and the following supplemental regulations.

1. Electronic message center signs may not exceed the maximum sign area allowed for the respective sign type or the following maximum areas, whichever is less:

a. 32 square feet in SR and O districts; and

b. 48 square feet in MX, C, and I districts.

The sign area allowed for electronic message center signs is not in addition to the maximum sign area allowed for a wall, projecting or freestanding sign, but rather is counted as part of the maximum area of the wall, projecting or freestanding sign. The board of adjustment may approve a greater sign area for electronic message center signs in accordance with the special exception procedures of Section 70.120.

2. Display of messages shall remain static, without any animation or special effects, for a period of not less than 5 minutes. The transition from one message to the next shall be direct and immediate, without any animation or special effects.

3. Electronic message center signs with an area exceeding the maximum allowable sign area in §60.040-G.1 may not be located within 50 feet of the driving surface of a signalized intersection, unless expressly approved by the board of adjustment as part of the special exception approval. This separation distance must be measured horizontally in a straight line from the nearest point of the sign structure to the nearest point of the street curb or edge of the traveled roadway marked or understood as such.

4. Electronic message center signs with a sign area exceeding the maximum allowable sign area in §60.040-G.1 may not be located within 200 feet of an R or AG-R district (other than street, highway, or freeway right-of-way) or a residential development area, unless expressly approved by the board of adjustment as part of the special exception approval. This separation distance does not apply if the electronic message center sign is not visible from the referenced district, area or lot. Required separation distances must

be measured horizontally in a straight line from the nearest point on a sign structure to the nearest point of an R or AG-R district or residential development area boundary.

5. Electronic message center signs are subject to the illumination standards established in Section 60.040-F.

Chapter 95 | Signs

Section 95.220 Terms Beginning with "S"

Sign, Dynamic Display

Any element of a sign or sign structure capable of displaying words, symbols, figures, images or messages that can be electronically or mechanically changed by remote or automatic means. This also includes any display that incorporates rotating panels, LED lights manipulated through digital input, "digital ink" or any other method or technology that allows a sign to present a series of images, messages or displays. This does not include electronic message center signs.

Sign, Electronic Message Center

An electronic sign or portion thereof which displays alphanumeric characters only, which can be electronically changed or rearranged without altering the face or the surface of the sign.