

April 5, 2023

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa

Call to Order

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa



Welcome

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa

Staff

Ashley Crites, AICP, Executive Director

Zach Ponds, Director of Planning

Jimbo Woodson, Deputy City Attorney

Planning Commission Members

Bill Wright, Chair

Tim Harrison, Vice-Chair

Vince Dooley

Estella Hare

Anne Hornsby

Eddie Pugh

Councilwoman Raevan
Howard Williams

Dena Prince

Steven Rumsey



Disclosure of Possible Conflicts

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa

A group of people are gathered around a table in a meeting room, looking at documents and talking. The scene is dimly lit, with a dark overlay. The people are wearing name tags and are focused on the work at hand. A sign on the table reads "TABLE 8".

Meeting Expectations

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa

Meeting Expectations

- **Steering Committee:**
 - Will *note role in process* (state that they were a Steering Committee member at the podium/on record) if providing public comment

Meeting Expectations

Planning and Zoning Commission Members:

- Should **review** draft code articles as provided in advance of the meetings
- Should **refrain from arguing** with public commenters
- Should **listen**, ask questions only if you do not understand and need **clarification**, be **respectful**, and desire an expedited proceeding

Meeting Expectations

All:

- Meetings will **begin at 5pm and end at 7pm**
 - If a topic is not finished, it will roll into the next scheduled meeting.
- A **three-minute timer** will be used and visible to all parties (PZC, staff, public)
 - Only the PZC members can grant a specified time extension
- Staff will **manage the flow** of the meeting for efficiency

The code rewrite will...

- Maintain what works today and update what does not
- Make the code more user-friendly
- Implement the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations
- Redefine or consolidate some existing zoning districts and add new districts.
- Update development standards and permitted uses

Zoning Ordinance Update Process

1. Zoning Text

- a. Purpose, Intensity, Dimensional Standards*
- b. Development Standards*
- c. Use Standards*

2. Zoning Map

Zoning Code Articles

1. General Provisions
2. Definitions and Rules for Measurement
3. Administration
4. Zoning Districts
5. Use Regulations
- 6. Development Standards**
7. Enforcement
8. Nonconformities

Signs and Billboards

General Requirements

Definitions

District Specific Requirements

Nonconformities

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa

Reed v. Town of Gilbert (2015)

- Supreme Court ruled that sign restrictions based on content violate the First Amendment – the Town of Gilbert’s sign ordinance was content-based, not content-neutral.
- Basically: do you need to read the sign in order to determine whether it violates your ordinance? If yes, your ordinance is content-based.

City of Austin, TX v. Reagan National Advertising of Austin, LLC (2022)

- Reagan filed suit against the City, alleging that the City's prohibition violated the First Amendment's free speech clause because you could digitize on-premise signs, but not off-premise (using decision from Reed v. Gilbert as their rationale).
- Supreme Court maintained that the City's on/off-premises distinction is content-neutral under the first amendment. The majority ruling said the distinction looks only at location, not the message of the sign itself.

Purpose

This article establishes regulations for the display and maintenance of signs, with the intent to:

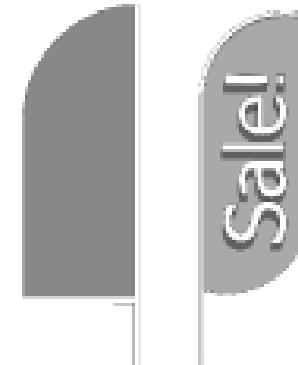
- **Preserve, protect, and enhance** areas of historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, and economic value;
- Establish standards that permit **reasonable use of signs** for businesses, wayfinding, local history, community activities, and other similar uses;
- **Preserve the views** of natural resources, green space, and other open spaces;
- Ensure the **safety of the roadway network** by minimizing clutter and **protect neighborhoods** from the potential impacts of sign; and,
- Integrate sign regulations with zoning regulations by establishing **specific requirements** for signs and billboards.

Definitions

Updated or new definitions for **different sign types** including A-frame, building/wall, feather flag, freestanding, projecting, temporary, and window

Sign, Building/Wall A sign displayed upon or attached to any part of the exterior of a building, including walls, doors, parapets, and marquees. Canopy signs, awning signs, projecting signs, and signs suspended from buildings are considered types of building signs.²³⁸

Sign, Feather Flag A temporary fabric sign intended to be inserted directly into the ground or into a mounting device that sits on the ground, often with a feather-like shape. Other common names for feather flag signs include blade flags, sail flags, quill flags, and flutter flags.²⁴⁰



Sign, Freestanding Any sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in the ground, and that are independent from any building or other structure and not located within right-of-way (see Sec. 24-6.10.6.b.1). The posts or other supporting structures shall be considered as part of the sign and shall be included in computing the sign display area.²⁴¹

General Provisions

Regulations have been carried forward and updated to reflect modern best practices, provisions that apply to all signs include:

- Sign measurements for **height, display area, and brightness**;
- **Permitted location** including measuring setback and distance from intersections;
- Illumination through direct light along with specific requirements for **electronic, digital, and video displays**;
- Provisions for addressing **unsafe or prohibited** signs; and,
- Sign permit **review process** and overall timeline.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement identified:

- Address
 - *Light projection onto sidewalks, etc.*
 - *Holograms*
 - *Rope lights arounds windows*
 - *Decorative lighting meant to attract attention*
- Prohibited signs:
 - *Would we be ok with a sign/billboard that emitted **smoke** or **steam**?*
 - *If we prohibit signs on property owned or controlled by the City (light poles, benches, etc.) we may miss out on **opportunities to partner** on bus shelters, etc.*
 - *A sign or supporting structure that has become deteriorated or damaged by any means to an extent of more than 50% as determined by the CBO, exclusive of foundations. **Eliminate foundation caveat?***

Sign Types

Freestanding Sign

- *Number: Based on street frontage (up to 2)*
- *Height: Up to 25 feet (60 feet for interstate)*
- *Size: 200-500 sq.ft. (depending on business)*



Sign Types

Building / Wall Sign

- *Number: Allowed for tenants*
- *Height: Aligned with the roofline*
- *Size: Based on building length (2 sq.ft. per lineal foot), 300 sq.ft. max for tenant sign*



Sign Examples



Sign Examples



Sign Examples



Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement identified:

- Freestanding Signs

- *Max height along 20/59 needs to be addressed, along with display area. There could be instances where a taller or bigger sign is merited because of topography, etc. Suggest administrative approval up to a certain height (80'?) and square footage (550 sf?) and special exception for anything after that (instead of variance).*
- *Clarify what abutting/adjacent to 20/59 means.*
- *Pole covers count today in allowable square feet. Look at incentivizing pole covers (allowing only address numbers on the support pole area) – allow an increase of up to 250 sf if they do a pole cover of an appropriate material, mimicking material on the main structure (or similar).*
- *Look at heights for shopping center free standing signs – the square footage is ok, but the max height for larger signs creates problems. May need to allow a LARGE shopping center (100,000 sf or more) to increase height of freestanding sign up to 30-35'.*

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement identified:

- Building/Wall Sign
 - *Neon is fine, but expensive, and needs to have caveats that it meet certain UL standards for safety.*
 - *Find ways to encourage LED.*

Sign Types

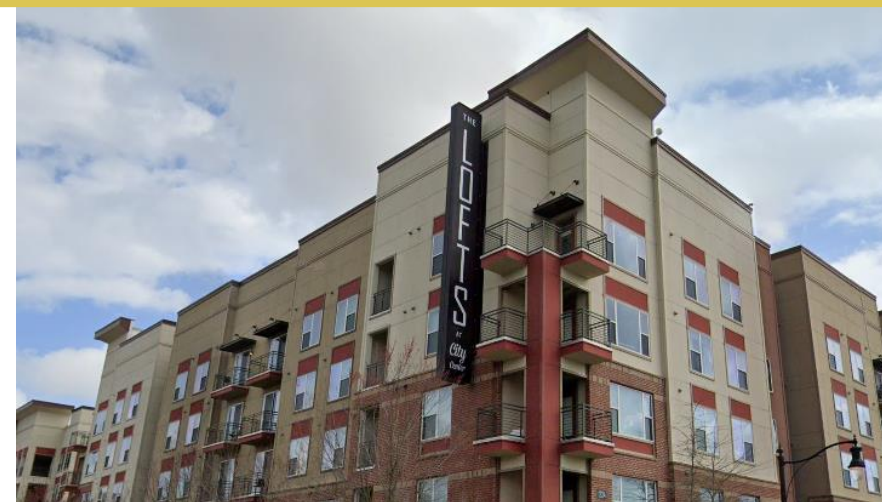
Subdivision Sign

- *Number: One per entrance*
- *Height: 8 ft.*
- *Size: 32 sq.ft.*



Multifamily Sign

- *Number: One per entrance*
- *Size: 32 sq.ft.*
- *Type: Building/wall or freestanding*



Sign Examples



Other Sign Types

Window Sign

- *Size: 20 percent of a window*



Shopping Center Sign

- *Number: Allowed for tenants*



Drive-Through Facility Signs

- *Number: Two for facility*
- *Height: Up to 8 feet*

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement identified:

- Look at addressing flags based on how they're **secured** – properly installed flag poles v. zip ties.
- How can we best handle signs on residential buildings – with contact information and who owns/manages? We see them a lot today and would like to limit size if possible.
- Be sure to fix **typo regarding banners** – increase from 24 sf to 32 sf maximum (**NOT** 232 sf) because event banners and commercial banners can't be differentiated.

Billboards

Regulations have been carried forward and updated to reflect modern best practices, specific updates include:

- **Detailed requirements** for permitted location, height, size, and distance between other billboards;
- **New Illustrations** that depict specific requirements (such as **spacing and residential setback**); and,
- **Design and configuration** of billboards (including display, lighting, sign faces, and other similar items).

Figure 6-13: Corner Lot Billboard Spacing Measurement

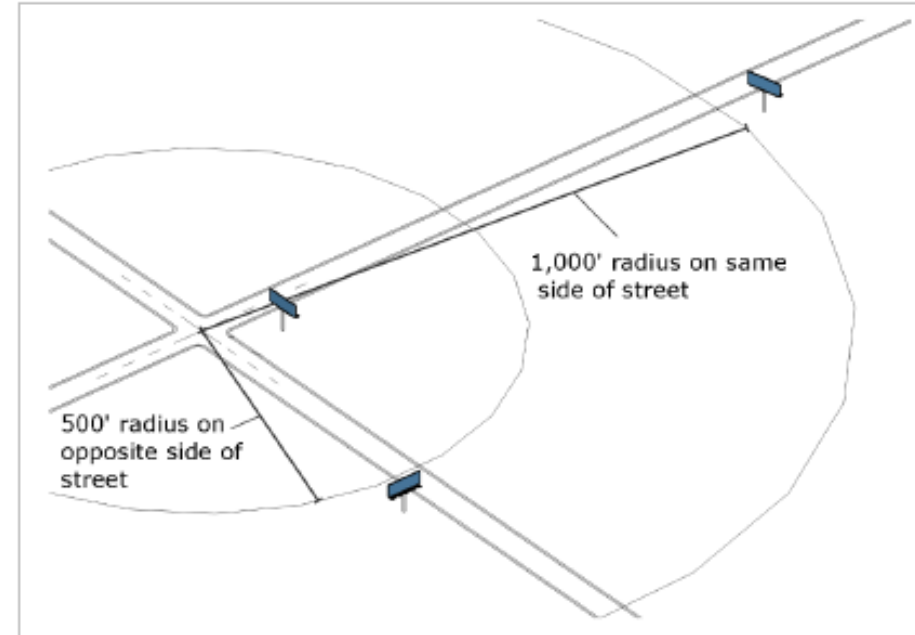
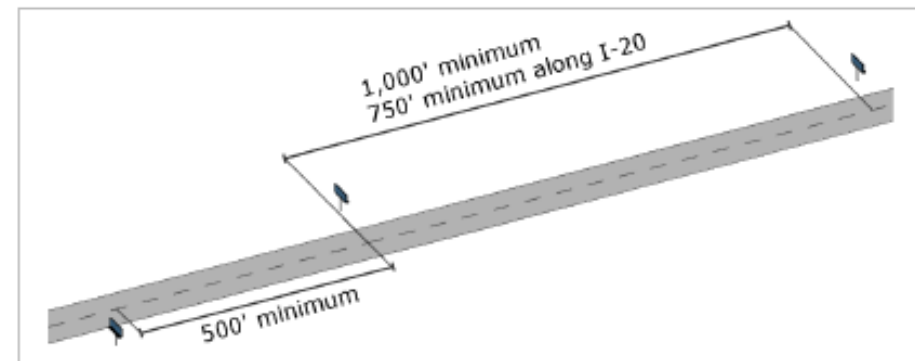


Figure 6-14: Non-Corner Lot Billboard Spacing Measurement



Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement identified:

- **Digital billboards** currently have a spacing limitation of 2,000 feet. Do we want to reduce that?
- Is there a way to **incentivize digital conversions** of billboards – take xx boards down, get 1 digital board in its place?

Nonconformities

Minimal changes to reflect best practices, many regulations are carried forward from the current code. This article:

- Defines the **applicability and requirements** for nonconforming signs and billboards; and,
- Outlines illegal signs and standards for removing or revising signs in violation of the zoning ordinance.

UPDATE

New section provide relief for nonconformities that are created by eminent domain or those created by voluntary donation of land for a public purpose.

District Specific Provisions

In addition to the general provision, specific regulations for signs are outlined in the Downtown and Riverfront Zoning Districts:

Downtown

- Regulations pertaining to **channel lettering or logos**; and,
- **Projecting sign** requirements including height, size, location, and location.

Riverfront

- Freestanding signs are only **permitted as monument signs**; and,
- **Building/wall sign size** is limited for buildings with street or river frontage, one foot per linear feet with a maximum size of 80 sq.ft.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement identified:

- Downtown
 - *A projecting sign “shall have no more than 12 square feet of copy area” is a little small – should either be in relation to the size of the building or maybe 18 square feet.*
- Riverfront
 - *The projecting sign “shall have no more than 12 square feet of copy area” is a little small – same as downtown, this should either be in relation to the size of the building or maybe 18 square feet.*
 - *Be sure that signage can address the riverfront – if you’re on the riverwalk or on the river, you want to be able to see signs.*
 - *If a center is developed on the river, monument signage should be allowed*

Public Comment

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa

Next Steps

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa

Special Called Meeting Schedule

May 3, 2023

Land Use Regulations

July 10, 2023

Subdivision Regulations

June 7, 2023

Land Use Regulations

Full schedule on **Framework.Tuscaloosa.com**

Provide comments

[Framework.Tuscaloosa.com](https://framework.tuscaloosa.com)

1. Review the draft articles posted prior to each meeting
2. Submit comments
3. View the meeting schedule

The screenshot displays the 'FRAME/WORK' website header with the tagline 'Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa'. The navigation menu includes 'ZONING CODE UPDATE' (highlighted), 'COMPREHENSIVE PLAN', 'ABOUT', 'NEWS', and a search icon. The main content area features a yellow background with the title 'ZONING CODE UPDATE' and a paragraph: 'On February 17, 2021, the City of Tuscaloosa Planning Commission adopted the Framework Comprehensive Plan. The City is now undertaking the second major phase of Framework and one of the most important steps to take the plan to action – updating the zoning ordinance.' Below this text are three icons: a calendar, an open book, and two overlapping speech bubbles. Underneath each icon is a corresponding text label: 'About the zoning code update', 'Documents and work products', and 'Provide input and feedback'. A URL bar at the bottom left shows 'https://framework.tuscaloosa.com/zoning-code/'.



Adjourn

FRAME/WORK

Creating a dynamic guide for Tuscaloosa