

**CITY OF COPPELL
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

STAFF REPORT

**A Text Amendment to amend the Code of Ordinances
Chapter 12, “Zoning”, Article 12-29
“Sign Regulations”**

P&Z HEARING DATE:	February 17, 2022 (continued from December 16, 2021)
C.C. WORKSESSION DATE:	March 8, 2022
C.C. PUBLIC HEARING DATE:	April 12, 2022

STAFF REP.: Matthew Steer, AICP, Development Services Administrator

PURPOSE: To amend the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 12, Article 29 (Sign Regulations), Section 12-29-1 (Definitions) and 12-29-4 (Provisions for business zoning districts), to define and allow for pylon signage adjacent to SH 121 and IH 635; and to allow public and private schools to use changeable letters on their monument signs; and provide for regulations and definitions; and to change “gasoline” to “fuel”.

HISTORY: The last revisions to the Sign Section of the Zoning Ordinance were adopted in July 2014. The changes were some of several amendments to the Zoning Ordinance related to our Small Business Assistance initiative. These consisted of reducing the front yard setback requirement for Monument signs from 15 feet to 10 feet in certain instances, increasing the allowable area of attached signs if they contain multiple street frontages, increasing the allowable size by 10% if business is located greater than 300’ from the right-of-way and allowing for a 10 square foot blade sign by right for each business in addition to standard signage. The revisions prior to 2014 were done in 2012. These consisted of a larger overhaul of the Sign Section.

DISCUSSION: The proposed amendments to the Sign Ordinance are long overdue. One of the proposed changes is a revision to the monument sign section and the other to allow pylon signage on the highway frontages. The last revisions were done in 2014 in an effort to help Small Businesses succeed. The previous revisions are listed in the HISTORY Section.

Staff brought a similar request before the Planning Commission on December 16, 2021. At that time, defining and allowing “seasonal businesses” to have changeable letters on monument signs was part of the request. Per the request of the Commission, that part has been excluded. Additional regulations for the pylon signage, and a minor verbiage change, using “fuel” in place of “gasoline” where it references prices on the monument sign have been included.

Existing Monument Sign Section

In general, the ordinance allows for one monument sign per site and the allowable size is dependent on the size of the lot; for those sites under 2 acres – maximum of 40 square feet and for those site 2 acres or larger- a maximum of 60 square feet is allowed. We require that the monument signs to be built on a monument base, as opposed to a pole base, with no separation between the base of the sign and natural grade. A monument sign shall contain only the name, logo, address, product or service of the establishment except as follows:

- i. In the case of gasoline service stations only, the price per gallon of gasoline;
- ii. In the case of governmental and religious organizations only, information concerning forthcoming public events.
- iii. In the case of multi-tenant office and/or retail buildings, the individual tenant names may be listed subject to:
 - (a) All individual tenant name plates must be the uniform size, color and font, in accordance with this ordinance.
 - (b) Minimum letter size shall be six inches,
 - (c) If a tenant vacates the lease space, the name plate must be removed within 30 days of such vacancy by the monument sign owner, owner of the property where the sign is located, or other party having control over such sign.

No other advertising or promotional information is permitted thereon. Such sign may be single or double faced. Can signs made of plastic or similar materials are not permitted as detached (monument) signs. Backlit plastic is not permitted within detached (monument) signs.

Proposed Revisions to Monument Sign Section:

The first of the proposed revisions is to add public and private schools as uses allowed to have non-electronic changeable letters in addition to those uses (religious institutions, governmental organizations) already allowed. The City made an agreement with the school district years ago, and it's been policy ever since, to allow these types of signs, but nothing was formally changed in the ordinance. This amendment will formalize this use and allow the Public schools to continue to use signage to inform parents of certain events such as the first day of school, when spring break is going to be, PTA Meeting dates, etc.

As mentioned above, per the request of the Commission, a separate PD Amendment allowing for Trinity River Kayak's changeable letter monument sign has been made and the seasonal business definition has been excluded from this request.

To complicate things, in analyzing this amendment, we were reminded by the City Attorney that we would not be allowed to regulate content of signs. Therefore, we are proposing to delete the content statement currently in the regulations - "information concerning forthcoming public events" and replace it with that "...changeable letters are permitted..."

The permanent monument signs without changeable letters typically list the name of the shopping center or name of the business. With changeable letters, comes changeable content. This could be funny to some and offensive to others. This should be something that is analyzed when making this decision.

Pylon Sign Addition

Staff is also proposing to allow for pylon signage along highway frontages. A pylon sign is defined as a freestanding sign supported by two vertical pole supports encased in brick, stone, or materials architecturally compatible with the main building or structure on the property. The size would be limited to 40' maximum height x 20' maximum width. This has previously been granted in two larger Conceptual Planned Developments on highway frontages and was recently brought up again with the two hotels proposed on SH 121. By allowing this by right, the ordinance can help promote the development of the remaining large parcel of land at IH 635 and Point West Boulevard and will allow existing retail an avenue to attract highway business by increasing the visibility. This would also benefit the current businesses that are part of a larger conceptual PD, if they wanted to propose joint signage. **Staff has included a comparison of surrounding cities for reference. Per the discussion at the Planning and Zoning Commission, staff has included the following revisions to the proposal:**

- **Prohibit pylon signage within 200' from residential properties,**
- **Required a visibility study for signage within 300' from residentially zoned properties,**
- **Set minimum and maximum setbacks from the right-of-way,**
- **Set a minimum text size of 12 inches in height with a minimum 8-inch clear space surrounding tenant names, and**
- **Included the lighting and design requirements per the discussion at the Planning and Zoning Commission.**

The redlined draft ordinance is attached for your review. We are proposing to bring these proposed changes to Council Work Session on March 8, 2022, for discussion and back to the Council on April 12, 2022, for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION:

Staff is recommending approval of the Sign Ordinance Amendments.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Recommend approval of the request
2. Recommend disapproval of the request
3. Recommend modification of the request
4. Take under advisement for reconsideration at a later date

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Surrounding City Pylon Sign Research
2. Draft Ordinance Changes (redline)