



**STAFF REPORT**  
**The City of Oklahoma City**  
**Planning Commission**  
**June 13, 2024**

**Item No. IV. 22.**

**(PC-10932) Recommendation on a proposed ordinance amendment relating to Signs, amending Article XVI, Sign Regulations, of Chapter 59, of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020, to create the Lake Hefner Parkway Scenic Corridor which would prohibit the installation of billboards. Wards 2 and 8.**

**I. PURPOSE**

This ordinance amendment will establish a Scenic Corridor along a portion of Highway 74 known as Lake Hefner Parkway with a southern boundary at NW Expressway and a northern boundary at Memorial Road for the purpose of prohibiting billboards.

**II. BACKGROUND**

Planning staff has been working since early 2020 to develop updates to the City's Sign Code. The objectives in updating the Sign Code are to implement policies recommended by the City's comprehensive plan (planokc), such as reducing sign clutter and improving the aesthetics of signs.

The purpose of this ordinance amendment is to establish the Lake Hefner Parkway Scenic Corridor as a revision to the recently adopted Chapter 59, Article XVI, Sign Regulations. The intent of a Scenic Corridor is to promote and enhance the beauty, order, and attractiveness of the city to residents, tourists and visitors and thus positively influence the economic prosperity of a designated area. More specifically, billboards are prohibited within the boundaries of designated Scenic Corridors. The Downtown Scenic Highway Area was adopted in 2004 to prohibit billboards in the area along both sides of Interstate 40, roughly from Pennsylvania Ave to I-235 and then north along both sides of I-235 up to NW 16th St. No other Scenic Corridors have since been designated.

The new sign code includes a new procedure and criteria for designating additional Scenic Corridors under Section 59-16111.K.2.b. These factors include:

- Significant character, interest, or character as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics
- Designation as a special purpose district
- Unique natural features or landscape visible from a street
- Established and familiar visual feature(s) of the City, or a neighborhood, community, or skyline
- Substantial public and private investments that have resulted in a heightened real estate market for new development.

Staff has identified Lake Hefner Parkway as a corridor that should also be designated as a Scenic Corridor in order to promote and enhance the beauty, order, and attractiveness of the city due to its proximity to the visible and unique natural features of Lake Hefner, the relative scarcity of existing billboards within the defined corridor boundaries, and the broad parkways on either side of the highway.

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Planning staff developed the proposed boundary based on the significant character and the unique natural features visible from this segment of Highway 74. Planning staff also assessed the number and concentrations of existing billboards along this corridor and researched existing zoning regulations for varying degrees of billboard prohibitions.

While most of the area within the visual corridor along Lake Hefner Parkway is within the jurisdiction of the City of Oklahoma City, there is a one mile stretch of the highway (between Hefner Rd and Britton Rd) where the eastern flank, along with some portions of the Highway 74/Britton Road interchange, are situated within the corporate limits, and therefore under the jurisdiction, of The Village.

On November 12, 2020 and September 9, 2021, Planning Staff made presentations to Planning Commission on a proposed new sign code that included information on the potential scenic corridors that were under consideration, including the Lake Hefner Parkway.

On April 14, 2022, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed new sign code to the City Council.

On August 16, 2022, City Council adopted Ordinance 27,135 enacting a moratorium on the acceptance of new applications for, processing of, and issuance of planned unit developments and simplified planned unit developments that would allow construction on, or use of, property within 660 feet of Lake Hefner Parkway from a southern boundary of NW Expressway to a northern boundary of Memorial Road of Oklahoma City for freestanding signs with a display surface area over 200 square feet and on the acceptance of new applications for, and issuance of, electrical, building or sign permits for freestanding signs over 200 square feet associated with rezoning applications submitted during the moratorium (Item IV.A.). By this adoption, the moratorium was in effect from August 16, 2022 through February 12, 2024.

On January 30, 2024, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 27,507 which extended this same moratorium. Per the provisions of that ordinance, the term of this moratorium was extended from February 12, 2024 to August 10, 2024, or to the date of the designation of the Lake Hefner Parkway as a Scenic Corridor, whichever occurs first. This ordinance also states that after Lake Hefner Parkway is designated as a Scenic Corridor, the moratorium shall automatically become null, void, and repealed (Item IV.A).

On February 13, 2024, City Council adopted the new sign code (Chapter 59, Article XVI) under Ordinance 27,526 (Item XI.E).

On March 14, 2024, Planning Department staff presented the proposed Lake Hefner Parkway Scenic Corridor at a Planning Commission Study Session.

On May 23, 2024 the ordinance was scheduled for final hearing at Planning Commission and deferred to allow for notice to be republished.

**III. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE**

The proposed ordinance will amend Chapter 59 (Zoning and Planning Code) of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code 2020 by prohibiting billboards within the boundaries of the proposed Lake Hefner Parkway Scenic Corridor. The ordinance defines the boundaries of the Lake Hefner Scenic Corridor through the proposed inclusion of a legal description in Section 59-16111.K.3.b. of the Municipal Code.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Recommend approval of the ordinance amendment to City Council.

*Attachments: Ordinance Amendment and boundary map*