



MEMORANDUM

Council Agenda
Item No. XI. O
7/30/2024

The City of OKLAHOMA CITY

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Craig Freeman, City Manager

1. Amendment to remove Lot 6, Block 2, Memorial Business Park, from the area to be designated as a scenic corridor.
2. Ordinance on final hearing relating to Zoning and Planning Code, amending Chapter 59 of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code, 2020, Article XVI – Sign Regulations, by amending Section 59-16111 – Off-Premise Signs/Billboards, to establish the Lake Hefner Parkway Scenic Corridor and prevent off-premise signs/billboards within said corridor.

Purpose:

The purpose of this ordinance amendment is to 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.

Background:

The purpose of Scenic Corridors 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. Billboards are prohibited within the boundaries of designated Scenic Corridors. The first, and currently only, Scenic Corridor was adopted into the Municipal Code in 2004 as the “Downtown Scenic Highway Area,” which extends 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.

This ordinance amendment would fulfill the City’s obligation to establish a permanent ban on billboards, as set forth in the settlement agreement previously approved by City Council on August 16, 2022, in the case *Lamar v. ODOT et al.*, U.S District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, Case No. 20-CV-1194.

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 sign code includes procedures 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 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.

On August 16, 2022, City Council adopted Ordinance 27,135 enacting a moratorium for billboard signs to be located along Lake Hefner Parkway (Item IV.A.). The moratorium has been extended until August 12, 2024 or to the date of the designation of the Lake Hefner Parkway as a Scenic Corridor, whichever occurs first. Upon the designation of Lake Hefner Parkway as a Scenic Corridor, the moratorium shall automatically become null, void, and repealed (Item IV.A.).

On March 14, 2024, the Planning Commission's Development Regulations Committee recommended the establishment of the Lake Hefner Scenic Corridor for introduction to the Planning Commission.

On June 13, 2024, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended City Council approval of the proposed ordinance amendment, with a revision to exclude Lot 6 of Block 2, Memorial Business Park, from the Lake Hefner Parkway Scenic Corridor, revising the legal description to state "less and except Lot 6, in Block 2 of Memorial Business Park".

Review:

Planning Department

Recommendation: Ordinance be adopted.