



# TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY PLAN COMMISSIONS

ONE GOVERNMENT CENTER, SUITE 1620, TOLEDO, OHIO 43604 PHONE 419-245-1200 FAX 419-936-3730

THOMAS C. GIBBONS, DIRECTOR



DATE: May 11, 2018

REF: M-6-18

TO: President Matt Cherry and Members of Council, City of Toledo

FROM: Toledo City Plan Commission, Thomas C. Gibbons, Secretary

SUBJECT: Request for Text Amendment regarding building identification signage in the Downtown Overlay District, enacting TMC§1103.0205(H).

The Toledo City Plan Commission considered the above-referenced request at its meeting on Thursday, May 10, 2018 at 2:00 P.M.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Subject

Request - Text Amendment regarding building identification signage in the Downtown Overlay District, enacting TMC§1103.0205(H).

Applicant - Toledo City Plan Commission  
One Government Center, Suite 1620  
Toledo, Ohio 43604

### Applicable Plans and Regulations

- Toledo Municipal Code Part Eleven: Planning and Zoning
- Toledo 20/20 Comprehensive Plan

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed text amendment to TMC§1103.0205 – *Design Guidelines*, is intended to add text regarding building identification signs in the Downtown Overlay District (DOD). Currently TMC§1103.0205 does not provide criteria for the regulation of building identification signs within the DOD. The proposed text amendment will provide regulations for building identification signs as shown in Exhibit “A”.

As seen across the entire country, city skylines are often defined and branded by the corporate graphics and/or signs located on high-rise buildings which sustain the local economy. When regulated properly, these signs can aide in the overall aesthetic of a cityscape, instead of creating visual clutter and distractions from architectural features. Often referenced as landmarks, building identification signs have the ability to impact the visual recognition of a city.

## STAFF ANALYSIS (cont'd)

Upon review of other major metropolitan areas in the area, it was determined that most cities regulate building identification signs within the downtown and Central Business Districts (CBD). Whether through separate architectural review committees or Plan Commission approval, most cities provide specific criteria for building identification signs on high-rise buildings. As a result there is a need for providing criteria and the regulation for building identification signs in the DOD. Therefore, proposed text amendment corrects an oversight in the Zoning Code where building identification signage is not addressed or regulated within the Downtown Overlay District.

The proposed text amendment provides the following regulations for Building Identification Signs within the DOD Design Guidelines of TMC§1103.0205. First, each building within the DOD is limited to one (1) building identification sign per building. Second, in order to increase pedestrian streetscape visibility, additional building signs may be installed but shall be limited to tenants and/or occupants located on the ground floor. Third, no sign or part of a sign shall be located above the parapet of any façade, this includes roof mounted signs. Finally, projecting signs are not allowed as building identification signage. A copy of the proposed text amendment language is included as Exhibit "A".

As mentioned in previous Downtown Toledo Master Plans (i.e. 2002), Design Guidelines for signs can help create a positive identity for individual businesses and a unified image for Downtown. Design Guidelines from the 2002 Downtown Toledo Master Plan included sign components such as size, location, materials, color, message and illumination. As described in the Master Plan, *"Of all the design elements used in commercial architecture, signs have the strongest impact on the quality and appearance of individual buildings and on the streetscape as a whole. Although signs can be designed and located to complement building architecture, they are often a major contributor to visual chaos"*. The proposed regulations are intended to protect the architectural character of the buildings in downtown as well as reduce the potential visual clutter from an over abundance of signage which could detract from the city skyline and the overall aesthetic of Downtown Toledo.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendment in order to provide criteria to regulate building identification signs within the DOD zoning designation which is consistent with the recommendations of the previous Downtown Toledo Master Plan. Additionally, staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendment because it corrects an inconsistency in the Zoning Code where building identification signage is not addressed or regulated within the Downtown Overlay District. Furthermore, building identification signage has become more prevalent with the increase of development in the DOD and therefore the proposed text amendment will meet the challenge of a changing condition.



## PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Toledo City Plan Commission recommends approval of the text amendment regarding building identification signage in the Downtown Overlay District, enacting TMC§1103.0205(H), to the Planning and Zoning Code as shown in Exhibit "A", to the Toledo City Council for the following three (3) reasons:

1. The proposed text amendment is consistent with the recommendations of the 2002 Downtown Toledo Master Plan and the stated purpose of this Zoning Code (TMC§1111.0506(B) *Review and Decision-Making Criteria*).
2. The proposed text amendment corrects an inconsistency in the Zoning Code where building identification signage is not addressed or regulated within the Downtown Overlay District (TMC§1111.0506(A) *Review and Decision-Making Criteria*); and
3. The proposed text amendment meets the challenge of a changing condition where building identification signage has become more prevalent with development in the Downtown Overlay District (TMC§1111.0506(A) *Review and Decision-Making Criteria*).

Respectfully Submitted,



Thomas C. Gibbons  
Secretary

Exhibit "A" follows

Cc: Lisa Cottrell, Administrator  
Ryne Sundvold, Planner

**Exhibit "A"**

(Proposed additions are shown in italics,  
proposed deletions are shown in strikethrough text)

**1103.0200 | -DO, Downtown Overlay District**

**1103.0205 Design Guidelines**

These guidelines are derived largely from the Design Guidelines chapter found in the 2002 Downtown Toledo Master Plan, as adopted by Ordinance 280-02.

**H. Building Identification Signs**

*Signage shall comply with Part 13, Title 9, Chapter 1387, Signs Permitted in Zoning Districts, and the following regulations:*

1. *Each building within the -DOD is limited to one (1) building identification sign.*
2. *Additional building signs shall be limited to tenants and/or occupants located on the ground floor.*
3. *No sign or part of a sign shall be located above the parapet of any facade. Roof mounted signs are prohibited.*
4. *Projecting signs are not allowed as building identification signage.*

**1113.0100 | Sign Provisions Reference Table**

Sign Provision	Zoning District Map Designation		Reference
	Existing District	New District	
<i>Downtown Overlay District</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>-DOD</i>	<i>Sec. 1103.0205</i>

**Exhibit "A" (cont'd)**

**1116.0100 | General Terms**

**1116.0112.2**

***Building Identification Sign***

*A sign used to identify the building name, or name of a business located within the building, on a high-rise building greater than three (3) stories.*

## Sundvold, Ryne

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**From:** Gibbons, Thomas  
**Sent:** Monday, April 30, 2018 10:54 AM  
**To:** 'Rachel Bach'; Sundvold, Ryne  
**Cc:** Cottrell, Lisa; AICP Eugene H. Naujock (eugenenujock@bex.net)  
**Subject:** RE: Contact Information

Rachel,

Thank you for your comments. We discussed this issue this morning and are actually considering eliminating #5 (which set the limitations). You are correct in that we should not be determining what the building owner wants to name their building. The entrance comment will also be addressed.

Thanks again,

Tom Gibbons  
Director  
Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commissions  
419.245.1200

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**From:** Rachel Bach [<mailto:rbach@connectoledo.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 30, 2018 9:28 AM  
**To:** Sundvold, Ryne  
**Cc:** Gibbons, Thomas; Cottrell, Lisa; AICP Eugene H. Naujock ([eugenenujock@bex.net](mailto:eugenenujock@bex.net))  
**Subject:** Contact Information

Hi Ryan,  
Thanks for sending the code, I have two comments:

1. I think the individual entrance part of this should be deleted: “Additional building signs shall be limited to tenants and/or occupants located on the ground floor ~~with separate individual entrances.~~” There are several office buildings that have retail space entered off of the lobby and therefore should be permitted signage (i.e. Barry’s Bagels, Key Bank branch, etc.).
2. I think this section should include some reference to the Alternate Principal Tenant, as designated by the property owner, since ultimately it should be there decision.  
*“Building identification signs shall be limited to business identification for the principal tenant of the building or, if applicable, the alternate principal tenant. For purposes of this subsection, “principal tenant” means a tenant that occupies 51% or more of the floor space in a high-rise building. If there is no principal tenant, ~~or if the property owner designates to the if the principal tenant informs the~~ Planning Director, in writing an alternate principal tenant, that it does not wish to display such a sign, then an alternate principal tenant may apply to the City for approval of such a sign identifying said alternate principal tenant (in place of, and not in addition to, such a sign identifying the principal tenant).”*

Also, what is the 2002 Downtown Master Plan, shouldn’t the 2017 Master Plan supersede that. I have not seen the 2002 Master Plan and did not see it on your website, could you send me a copy. By the way, could you update my contact information in your records. The draft was sent to my gmail account.

**Rachel Bach**  
President and CEO  
Connectoledo  
300 Madison Avenue #0110



## Sundvold, Ryne

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**From:** Eugene Naujock [eugenenujock@bex.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 30, 2018 8:40 PM  
**To:** Sundvold, Ryne  
**Subject:** Fwd: M-6-18 - Downtown Overlay District - Building Identification Signage

Ryne,

This isn't a TDC review, but I thought that Bob Seyfang's comment is worth considering and might be an amendment at the PC hearing.

Gene

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Robert Seyfang <[RSeyfang@msn.com](mailto:RSeyfang@msn.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: M-6-18 - Downtown Overlay District - Building Identification Signage  
**Date:** April 30, 2018 at 8:40:45 AM EDT  
**To:** "[raboezi@accesstoledo.com](mailto:raboezi@accesstoledo.com)" <[raboezi@accesstoledo.com](mailto:raboezi@accesstoledo.com)>, "[mduket@duketarchitects.com](mailto:mduket@duketarchitects.com)" <[mduket@duketarchitects.com](mailto:mduket@duketarchitects.com)>, "[PHollenbeck@TheCollaborativeInc.com](mailto:PHollenbeck@TheCollaborativeInc.com)" <[PHollenbeck@TheCollaborativeInc.com](mailto:PHollenbeck@TheCollaborativeInc.com)>, "[rbach@connectoledo.org](mailto:rbach@connectoledo.org)" <[rbach@connectoledo.org](mailto:rbach@connectoledo.org)>, "[eugenenujock@bex.net](mailto:eugenenujock@bex.net)" <[eugenenujock@bex.net](mailto:eugenenujock@bex.net)>  
**Cc:** "[thomas.gibbons@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:thomas.gibbons@toledo.oh.gov)" <[thomas.gibbons@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:thomas.gibbons@toledo.oh.gov)>

Gene, My only concern is in regard to a "building identification" sign with the name of the building owner or original owner. For instance "The Bakery Building" or the "Gardner Building" or Fort Industry Square". The proposed amendment refers only to primary tenant. Bob

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Eugene Naujock](mailto:Eugene.Naujock)  
**To:** [Rey Boezi](mailto:Rey.Boezi) ; [Michael Duket](mailto:Michael.Duket) ; [Paul Hollenbeck](mailto:Paul.Hollenbeck) ; [Bob Seyfang](mailto:Bob.Seyfang) ; [Rachel Bach](mailto:Rachel.Bach)  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 29, 2018 9:37 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: M-6-18 - Downtown Overlay District - Building Identification Signage

The attached PC proposal seems to address the concerns raised re the Garden Inn. Comments, suggestions for our response.

Gene

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Sundvold, Ryne" <[Ryne.Sundvold@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:Ryne.Sundvold@toledo.oh.gov)>  
**Subject:** M-6-18 - Downtown Overlay District - Building Identification Signage  
**Date:** April 27, 2018 at 3:27:54 PM EDT  
**To:** "Eugene Naujock (E-mail 2)" <[eugenenujock@buckeye-express.com](mailto:eugenenujock@buckeye-express.com)>, "Ken Fallows (E-mail)" <[kwf2806@att.net](mailto:kwf2806@att.net)>, "Michael Duket (E-mail)" <[mduket@duketarchitects.com](mailto:mduket@duketarchitects.com)>, "Rey Boezi (E-mail)" <[raboezi@accesstoledo.com](mailto:raboezi@accesstoledo.com)>, "Robert Seyfang (E-mail)" <[rseyfang@msn.com](mailto:rseyfang@msn.com)>, "William Thomas (E-mail)" <[billthomas@dttd.com](mailto:billthomas@dttd.com)>, 'Paul Hollenbeck' <[phollenbeck@thecollaborativeinc.com](mailto:phollenbeck@thecollaborativeinc.com)>  
**Cc:** "Cottrell, Lisa" <[Lisa.Cottrell@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:Lisa.Cottrell@toledo.oh.gov)>, "Gibbons, Thomas" <[Thomas.Gibbons@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:Thomas.Gibbons@toledo.oh.gov)>

TDC members,

Attached is a proposed text amendment regarding building identification signs for high-rise buildings in the Downtown Overlay District (DOD). The current overlay regulations (TMC§1103.0205) do not address building signs within the DOD. We are proposing to limit each high-rise building (over 3 stories) in the DOD to only one (1) building identification sign. This will not

restrict ground level businesses or storefronts with separate entrances from installing signage. The goal is to reduce an over abundance of signage on high-rise buildings in the DOD. This case is planned to be reviewed at the May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Plan Commission hearing at 2:00 PM. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns in regard to the proposed text.

Regards,

Ryne Sundvold, Planner

Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commissions

One Government Center, Suite 1620

Toledo, Ohio 43604

(419)245-1200

[Ryne.Sundvold@toledo.oh.gov](mailto:Ryne.Sundvold@toledo.oh.gov)



the consistency of the city center development pattern and the street-level linkages. They must be designed to maintain pedestrian connections and view corridors along traditional street rights-of-way. It is also critical that they be designed to share their internal activity with the street. Fortress architecture is a worst case example of mega-structure development because it turns its back to the city, presents blank walls to the perimeter streets and internalizes all its activity. Recommendations for minimizing these negative impacts include:

- Breaking the horizontal expanse of long facades into increments that relate to the human scale by using fenestration, architectural detailing, variable setbacks and roof lines to define a sequence of bays;
- Articulating the building mass to create an aggregation of smaller forms as a means of reducing the perception of overwhelming bulk; providing a sequence of public spaces and walkways that are linked to the street grid; using setbacks that reinforce the definition of the streetwall and bring interior activities to the edge of the pedestrian zone; orienting major facades and entrances to the streets that serve as important pedestrian corridors; using transparent ground-story facades and retail activity to integrate the structure functionally with other uses that edge the street; and
- Designing transitions in height and massing. Such guidelines for new construction can create a conscience for developers by clearly articulating the community's objectives toward a more coherent pattern of development and a more attractive environment.

### Signs

Of all the design elements used in commercial architecture, signs have the strongest impact on the quality and appearance of individual buildings and on the streetscape as a whole. Although signs can be designed and located to complement building architecture, they are often a major contributor to visual chaos.

The sign's primary functions are to identify a business, to contribute to its image and to indicate the goods and services it offers. To achieve these purposes successfully, a sign must be eye-catching without offending. It must make its point without too many details or words; it must not be so abstract that its message is ambiguous. Each sign should complement the architecture of the building on which it is located and serve as a unifying element in the blockface. Billboards that advertise off-premise businesses or products are generally not appropriate within Downtown and should be discouraged.

Graphic simplicity and compatibility with the building architecture are the basic principles of designing an effective and attractive system of signage. Design guidelines help show how the sign's components-size, location, materials, color, lettering and illumination – can be used to create a positive identity for individual businesses and a unified image for Downtown.



**Size.** Each sign should be sized in proportion to the storefront and the building facade as a whole. Signs should never be allowed to obscure or overwhelm the basic architectural character of the building. A ratio of one square foot of sign area for each linear foot of building frontage is a good rule of thumb in determining appropriate sign sizes.

**Location.** On traditional multistory commercial buildings, signs fit most naturally on the lintel or sign frieze that separates the ground-level storefront from the upper facade. In this location, the sign serves as a boundary between the two major facade components and helps strengthen their definition. Wherever possible, signs within a blockface should be located at approximately the same height to create a unifying element.

**Materials.** The major consideration in selecting sign materials is compatibility with the building's overall architectural character. Many materials are appropriate, including wood, metal, plastic, neon and canvas. Materials that convey a low quality image, such as plastic panel signs, should be avoided.

**Color.** Bright colors are entirely appropriate for signs, but the use of too many colors should be avoided.

**Message.** The words used on a sign should be limited to the name of the business and other pertinent information related to its operation; the sign should not be used for product advertising. Simplicity is the key to legibility and elegance. Bold simple lettering styles and the use of recognized symbols are most effective.

**Illumination.** Flashing and moving signs are generally considered inappropriate for Downtown; indirectly lit signs are preferred.