



CITY OF NORMAN, OK MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 9, 2026

FROM: Elisabeth Muckala, Asst. City Attorney

TO: Norman Planning Commission

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE, REJECTION, AMENDMENT AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF ORDINANCE O-2526-72: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, AMENDING SECTION 28-601 ("STANDARDS") OF ARTICLE 28-VI ("OFF-PREMISES SIGNS") WITHIN CHAPTER 28 ("SIGN REGULATIONS") OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF NORMAN TO ADOPT CORRECTED LANGUAGE FULLY IMPLEMENTING PREVIOUSLY-APPROVED STANDARDS; AND PROVIDING FOR THE SEVERABILITY THEREOF.

BACKGROUND:

Norman's current Sign Code was originally passed in 1976 and set out in Chapter 18 of the Norman Municipal Code (NMC). Since passage, several different provisions of the code have been amended. With respect to off-premises signs, four such amendments have been adopted by the Norman City Council. At passage of the original code, "off-premise signs" were originally allowed under certain conditions on C-2, C-3 and I-2 zoned properties that abutted "the right-of-way of arterial highways and major arterials as designated by the Major streets and Highways Plan of the City of Norman." Particular provisions recognized that off-premise signs were then allowed to be placed along "controlled access arterial highways," "scenic highways," and "right-of-way of major arterials." See NMC 18-607 (1976).

Ordinance O-9192-37, adopted April 14, 1992, amended these provisions in order to remove C-3 from the list of allowable zones and implemented other amendments to applicable conditions and standards for off-premises signs. Ordinance O-9495-40, adopted March 14, 1995, implemented additional amendments mostly refining allowable size, number, and distance placement of off-premises signs.

For the first time, Ordinance O-0102-25, adopted January 2, 2002, amended the types of rights-of-way that off-premises signs could permissibly abut. The provision was limited to allow off-premises signs "only on parcels abutting Interstate Highway 35" and placed only within a certain distance of I-35 and on only those parcels zoned C-2 or I-2. All other language referencing placement along "controlled access arterial highways," "scenic highways," and "right-of-way of major arterials," were removed, along with references to the City's "major streets and highways plan." The "Off-Premise Sign" provision was also renumbered to

account for the removal of these several provisions. See attached information regarding O-0102-25.

The last amendment affecting these provisions was effectuated by Ordinance O-1112-32, adopted April 24, 2011, and which resulted in the addition of provisions regulating the use of electronic digital technology with respect to off-premises signs. See attached information regarding O-1112-32. Ordinance O-1112-32, as drafted, reflects that the amendments approved by O-0102-25 were correctly implemented at the time Ordinance O-1112-32 was considered.

DISCUSSION:

At some point in time following approval of O-1112-32, it appears that some of the amended changes accomplished by Ordinance O-0102-25 were incorrectly implemented or altered by the company hired to codify NMC amendments at that time, Municode. The City recently updated its contract with Municode, which resulted in the City now self-publishing its own code and amendments. That changeover took place in February of 2023, and concurrently with the City Council's approval of Ordinance O-2223-23, which recodified (fully repealed and replaced) the entirety of the NMC. During the recodification, the Sign Code "moved" from Chapter 18 to Chapter 28 and the language changed such that previous references to "off-premise" were replaced with the language "off-premises".

Following recodification, the Off-Premises Signs provisions described above are now found at NMC 28-601. Recently it came to City Staff's attention that language within NMC 28-601 seemed internally inconsistent, raising questions regarding interpretation and applicability. Upon review of the history of this provision and the historical amendments, the codification error described above was discovered. It cannot be determined by staff when this codification error would have occurred, except that it was before the City became a self-publishing entity in 2023. However, because the error existed in the code language at the time of the recodification and was technically re-adopted in its incorrect form by the adoption of Ordinance O-2223-23, a formal amendment is now required in order to correct the applicable language in order to fully implement the amendments previously approved by City Council.

To accomplish this correction, subparts (e), (f) and (g) of NMC 28-601 must be stricken. The attached ordinance, O-2526-72, strikes only these three sub-provisions in order to allow implementation of the previously approved amendments. No other changes will be implemented by this amendment, if approved. As a result of this correction, the language will clearly and unequivocally limit the by-right placement of Off-Premises Signs to only C-2 and I-2 parcels abutting I-35 and otherwise complying with the conditions set forth in Chapter 28.

RECOMMENDATION:

City Staff recommends approval of Ordinance O-2526-72, in order to implement the previously approved amendments, and to resolve language inconsistencies.