FACTSHEET

TITLE: TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 17020 - Amend Chapter 27.69.260 of the Lincoln Municipal Code relating to signage regulations pertaining to Non-residential Healthcare Facilities and Post-Secondary Schools to provide for marquee and directional signs for internal way-finding and increase the allowable square footage for freestanding signs and wall signs.

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Planning Commission

APPLICANT: Bryan Medical Center

RECOMMENDATION: Approval (9-0: Beckius, Joy, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Washington, Hove, Corr and Scheer voting 'yes')

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS AFFECTED: N/A

SPONSOR: Planning Department

OPPONENTS: None present at hearing.

REASON FOR LEGISLATION:

A text amendment is proposed to update the Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to sign regulations for non-residential health care and post secondary education facilities, including hospitals and private colleges/universities. The proposal would provide for marquee and directional signs to be permitted as internal way finding signs while allowing for additional square footage up to 100 square feet for freestanding signs and up to 200 square feet for wall signs.

DISCUSSION/FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. This text amendment request appeared on the Consent Agenda of the Planning Commission on December 6, 2017; however, it was removed from the Consent Agenda and opened for public hearing at the request of Commissioner Corr.

2. The staff recommendation of approval is based upon the “Analysis” as set forth on pp.2-3, concluding that the text amendment will allow flexibility for campus signage associated with non-residential health care facilities and post-secondary education facilities. These facilities generally are found in residential districts which have more limiting regulations in so far as allowable signage and are located on large campuses which have larger scale buildings. The proposal would still limit these facilities to less signage than would otherwise be allowed in other zoning districts. Staff presentation is found on pp.7-8.

3. Testimony on behalf of the applicant is found on p.8. There was no testimony in support or in opposition to this application. Staff discussion with the Planning Commission is found on p.8. Applicant’s rebuttal is found on p. 8-9.

4. On December 6, 2017, the Planning Commission voted 9-0 to recommend approval of this text amendment.

FACTSHEET PREPARED BY: Geri Rorabaugh, Administrative Officer

REVIEWED BY: David R. Cary, Planning Director

DATE: December 11, 2017
COMPATIBILITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
The 2040 Comprehensive Plan supports health care facilities and community colleges, trade schools and universities by recognizing the need to plan for further construction on medical campuses and support the necessary expansion of education facilities while remaining sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods. This request is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan because it allows for a reasonable increase in the allowable signage for non-residential health care facilities and post-secondary schools which are in a campus setting.
KEY QUOTES FROM THE 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

P. 8.6 - Health Care

- Hospitals represent one of the highest and most important community service land uses. Lincoln has a growing number of medical campuses such as Bryan LGH East and West, St. Elizabeth’s Regional Medical Center, Madonna Rehabilitation hospital.

p. 8.7 - Health Care

- Any hospital expansion will need to take into consideration the impact on adjacent neighborhoods.
- Plan for further construction on medical campuses.

p. 8.9 - Community Colleges and Trade Schools and Universities

- Lincoln has multiple institutions of higher learning, with campuses located throughout the city.
- Support the necessary expansion of education facilities while remaining sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS

1. This request is for a text amendment to amend the Zoning Ordinance 27.69.260 pertaining to Nonresidential Health Care Facilities and Post-Secondary Schools. This section of the Zoning Ordinance pertains to campuses having more than one building and two acres of land. The request is to provide for marquee and directional signs to be permitted for internal way finding, to increase the allowable square footage for freestanding signs to 100 square feet and to increase allowable square footage for wall signs to 200 square feet of 30% of the total square footage of said architectural elevation.

2. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance (27.69.260) does not specifically allow for marquee and directional signs as permitted for internal way finding. The current Ordinance also limits freestanding signs to 50 square feet in sign area and makes distinction between a major street and other streets whereby if the sign is on a major street the 50 square feet is permitted, but otherwise 32 square feet for any other street. The current regulations also limit wall signs to 50 square feet; anything over these regulations may be approved by the City Council through a Special Permit as part of a campus signage plan.

3. Proposed modifications to the text are specifically as follows:

27.69.260 (a) Add text that the signing plan shall identify all signage.

27.69.260 (b) Delete text requiring that signs proposed in required yards shall be approved as part of the landscaping plan and add text that marquee and directional signs shall be permitted for internal way finding.

27.69.260 (c) Delete text pertaining to if the freestanding sign is on a major street and delete text limiting height to six feet and square footage to 32 square feet for any other street and increase the allowable square footage to 100 square feet.

27.69.260 (e) Delete text concerning all wall signs over 50 square feet in sign area shall be approved in the permit and permit wall signs on each architectural elevation of a building which do not exceed 200 square feet or 30% of the total square footage of the architectural elevation.

4. A general listing of schools, community colleges, colleges and academies through prior special permits includes the following known entities:

- Union College (S 52nd Street and Stockwell Street)
- Private School (5000 Tipperary Tr)
- Seventh Day Adventists School (S. 31st Street & C Street)
- Pioneer Gymnastics (7545 Pioneers Blvd)
- Tara Hill Dance Studio (S. 61st Street and Pine Lake Road)
- Okinawan Karate School (S. 9th Street and Pioneers Blvd)
- Club Kicks (S. 48th Street & Rent Worth Drive)
- Thompson Creek (56th and Thompson Creek)
- Nebraska Wesleyan University (N. 50th & St. Paul)
A general listing of special permits with entities associated with Healthcare Facilities; Non-Residential below includes the following:

Eastmont Towers (S 63rd Street & O Street)
Madonna (S 56th Street & South Street)
Tabitha (S 47th Street & Randolph Street)
The Ambassador Lincoln (Normal Blvd & Cotner Blvd)
Homestead Health Care (S 54th Street & LaSalle)
Nebraska Heart Institute (S 91st Street & Heritage Lakes Drive)
Bickford Cottage (S 45th & Old Cheney Road)
Medical Clinic (S 13th Street & Dakota Street)
Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (S 17th Street & South Street)
Bryan Medical Center East Campus (S. 50th Street & A Street)
Health Care Facility (S. Coddington and W. O Street)
Bryan Medical Center West (S. 17th Street and South Street)
Briarpark Plaza Health Care Facility (S. 48th Street and Old Cheney Road)
Convalescent Home (S 14th Street and Van Dorn Street)
St. Monica’s (Lakewood Dr. & Wedgewood Dr)
Bryan LGH (S. 27th Street and Tamarin Ridge Road)
Center Point, Inc. (N. 26th & P Street)

Since the provisions of 27.69.260 pertaining to Nonresidential Health Care Facilities and Post-Secondary Schools require more than one building and two acres of land not all of the above entities will necessarily qualify for the proposed amendment since this section is geared toward a campus environment as opposed to a single building/parcel.

5. The proposed text amendment will allow flexibility for campus signage associated with non-residential health care facilities and post-secondary education facilities. These facilities generally are found in residential districts which are more limited in so far as allowable signage. In addition, these facilities generally existing on large campuses and have larger scale buildings. The proposal would still limit these facilities to less allowable signage than would otherwise be allowed in other districts. Wall signs are allowed up to 500 square feet in size in the O-3 District, which is a comparable zoning district.

6. Related Special Permit 1219N includes sign amendments for the Bryan East Campus, specifically five wall signs up to 200 square feet and one wall sign up to 150 square feet are proposed to allow identification of buildings within the campus. Bryan Medical Center held a neighborhood meeting on November 7, 2017 to discuss the proposed signage amendments to the Bryan East campus signage plan. No opposition was expressed by the neighbors in attendance.

7. This request is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan because it allows for a reasonable increase in the allowable signage for growing non-residential health care facilities and post-secondary schools which are in a campus setting.

Prepared by

George Wesselhoft, Planner
(402) 441-6366 or gwesselhoft@lincoln.ne.gov Date: November 2, 2017

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AN ORDINANCE amending Title 27 of the Lincoln Municipal Code (the "Zoning Ordinance") by amending Section 27.69.260 to revise the sign provisions for Nonresidential Health Care Facilities and Post Secondary Schools and repealing Section 27.69.260 as hitherto existing.

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Lincoln, Nebraska:

Section 1. That Section 27.69.260 of the Lincoln Municipal Code be amended to read as follows:

Section 27.69.260 Nonresidential Health Care Facilities and Post Secondary Schools.

Campuses of nonresidential health care facilities and private post secondary schools having more than one building and two acres of land, may have a campus signing plan approved under the provisions of Section 27.63.080 and 27.63.075 to provide for public safety and to accommodate the unique requirements for services, provided:

(a) The signing plan shall identify all signage and be designed to minimize adverse impact on surrounding properties;

(b) Marquee and directional signs shall be permitted for internal way finding. Any signs proposed in required yards shall be approved as part of the landscaping plan;

(c) No freestanding sign shall exceed eight feet in height or one hundred fifty square feet in sign area if on a major street, and six feet in height and thirty-two square feet on any other street;

(d) Signage shall have no exposed illumination, except one "emergency" sign may have direct lighting;
(e) The total square footage of all wall signs on each architectural elevation of a building shall not exceed 200 square feet or 30% of the total square footage of said architectural elevation, whichever is less. All wall signs over fifty square feet in sign area shall be approved in the permit.

Said campus signing plan may be approved by administrative amendment as provided in Section 27.63.030 if a special permit is existent for the health care facility or secondary school and plot plan.

The campus signing plan regulations in subparagraphs (c), (d), and (e) above may be modified by the City Council in connection with the granting of a special permit in conformance with the requirements of Chapter 27.63.

Section 2. That Section 27.69.260 of the Lincoln Municipal Code as hitherto existing be and the same is hereby repealed.

Section 3. This ordinance shall be published, within fifteen days after the passage hereof, in one issue of a daily or weekly newspaper of general circulation in the City, or posted on the official bulletin board of the City, located on the wall across from the City Clerk’s office at 555 S. 10th Street, in lieu and in place of the foregoing newspaper publication with notice of passage and such posting to be given by publication one time in the official newspaper by the City Clerk. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and publication or after its posting and notice of such posting given by publication as herein and in the City Charter provided.

Introduced by:
17-XXX

Approved as to Form & Legality:

____________________________
City Attorney

Approved this ___ day of ____________, 2017:

____________________________
Mayor
TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 17020

TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 17020, TO AMEND TITLE 27 OF THE LINCOLN MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING SIGNAGE REGULATIONS PERTAINING NONRESIDENTIAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES AND POST-SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE FOR INTERAL WAY-FINDING SIGNS AND FREESTANDING SIGNS.

December 6, 2017


Staff recommendation: Approval.

Corr disclosed the text amendment was discussed at a Mayor’s Neighborhood Roundtable meeting that she attended. No other ex parte communications were disclosed.

Staff Presentation: George Wesselhoft of the Planning Department stated this text change would apply to nonresidential healthcare facilities and post-secondary schools. Currently, the regulations do not provide for marquee and directional signs and limit wall signage. Anything beyond the 50-foot requirement can be amended by the City Council. The basis for this proposal is to allow for more flexibility for campus signage associated with these larger uses which are generally located within residential areas. The regulations are still limited compared to other districts like commercial.

Corr said there were questions raised at the Mayor’s Neighborhood Roundtable meeting about the differences between major and minor streets. In this case, Sumner is not a major street, so it is possible to put a huge sign there. That causes her hesitation. Wesselhoft said it can be expected that these uses will grow over time and there are other streets that could be impacted; however, as a general rule, there are other types of land uses and transportation issues that would be far more impactful than signage, and there are still protections written in for neighborhoods relating to size and illumination.

Corr asked about the impact of different types of illuminated signs. Wesselhoft said he is not an expert on illuminated signs and the proposed changes do not address illumination.

Corr wondered about the limitations placed on the number of monument-type signs allowed. Wesselhoft said he believes the limitation is one per campus.

Corr asked about removing the requirement that proposed signs be shown as part of the landscaping plan. Wesselhoft explained that these changes would not remove any landscaping requirements. It is simply unnecessary to address landscaping in the signage plan.

Washington asked for clarification about illuminated sign definitions. Steve Henrichsen, Planning Department, said signage in these areas shall have no exposed illumination. Most signs in these areas are backlit. There is already a section that says a campus can have additional signs, as approved by City Council, so that should alleviate concerns about any limit on emergency signs, which obviously need to be highly visible. Sumner is a local street, but it is important to the Bryan East Campus. The sign ordinance has a definition for a marquee sign. In the case of a hospital, these signs would be attached to a canopy or other
area that projects from the building. A campus of this type has four or five major components, each with a different name, that are interconnected, so the additional signage helps the public to know which entrance to use.

Corr asked if signs are being removed from landscape plans because they are going to be separate. Henrichsen confirmed that there are separate plans for screening.

**Proponents:**

1. DaNay Kalkowski, Seacrest & Kalkowski, 1128 Lincoln Mall, stated the Bryan East campus has special signage needs. The signage plan exists as part of the codes and the regulations are quite limited in the context of a large campus. The main goal specifically for Bryan is discussed in the application for Special Permit 1219N, but it seemed useful to propose a text change at this juncture to create more flexibility. The proposed change will specifically allow marquee and directional signs, which have been allowed, but not expressly so within the code. These types of way-finding signs are very important on a hospital campus. The second aspect of the proposed text change is to allow more flexibility with sign size, again, given the large size of these campuses. A 50-foot sign is not as overwhelming on a multi-story building. Even if the text changes are passed, there are still two instances where the applicant will go to City Council asking for additional size.

Washington asked if requiring a signage plan for campuses was considered. Kalkowski said that most proposal will require a plan, just by the nature of the request. Washington clarified that she wondered if the legal language should include “must”, in other words, specifically require a sign plan be submitted. Kalkowski responded that one can presume that if signage is being requested, a plan is required.

Harris asked if there is a “best practices” when it comes to signage for hospitals. Kalkowski said she is not aware of any and they might all be unique due to the variable nature of healthcare facilities.

There was no testimony in opposition.

**Staff Questions:**

Washington asked staff about the necessity of requiring a sign plan. Wesselhoft said that is a requirement of the special permit. He noted that there are those who meet the sign guidelines for their District who do not necessarily need to request an amendment.

Corr had questions about what other uses would be allowed in terms of signage. Wesselhoft said they would have to meet the guidelines for their area. Some areas are permitted up to 100 or 200 feet of signage space and beyond that, they could go to City Council. He noted that this is not like comparing “apples to apples” because this is a specific use type. Corr said her concern is that these uses are found in residential areas. Wesselhoft explained that while these proposed changes are more permissive, they are nowhere near as permissive as what is allowed in a commercial area.

**Applicant Rebuttal:**

Kalkowski said that in an O-3 District, for example, a business would be allowed significantly more signage. These provisions are still restrictive. Corr thank Kalkowski for the information as
that was the point she was trying to get at.

TEXT AMENDMENT. 17020  
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:  
December 6, 2017

Hove moved for approval, seconded by Beckius.

Corr thanked the applicants for removing this from the Consent Agenda. She had lingering questions from the Mayor’s Roundtable meeting and this cleared things up.

Scheer stated these changes are sensible for these larger sites where way-finding is so important and this is a good move.

Motion carried, 9-0: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Hove, Joy, Washington, and Scheer voting ‘yes’.

Note: This is a recommendation to the City Council.