



# Staff Report

PLANNING DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY and NEIGHBORHOODS

**To:** Salt Lake City Planning Commission  
**From:** Meagan Booth, Principal Planner  
801-535-7213, [meagan.booth@slcgov.com](mailto:meagan.booth@slcgov.com)  
**Date:** February 8, 2023  
**Re:** PLNPCM2021-00190 –Sign Ordinance Text Amendment to allow Pole Signs on Public and Private School Property

## Zoning Text Amendment

**PROPERTY ADDRESS:** Citywide  
**MASTER PLAN:** Citywide  
**ZONING DISTRICT:** Public and Private Schools K-12 in All Zoning Districts

**REQUEST:** Paul Schulte with the Salt Lake School District has submitted a petition to amend the Sign Ordinance to allow freestanding pole signs on school premises.

The Planning Commission’s role in this application is to provide a recommendation to the City Council, which will make the final decision on the requested text amendment.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the information in this staff report and the factors to consider for text amendments, the staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a positive recommendation to the City Council based on the staff’s proposed text to amend Section 21A.46.052.

## ATTACHMENTS

- A. [Staff Proposed Zoning Text to 21A.46.052](#)
- B. [Applicant Information and Narrative](#)
- C. [Analysis of Standards -Standards for General Amendments](#)
- D. [Public Process and Comments](#)
- E. [Department Review Comments](#)

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

The Salt Lake School District has submitted a text amendment to allow pole signs on school properties. This is the result of an enforcement case related to a pole sign constructed at a high school in which the pole sign was not allowed by the code.

The applicant's initial proposal was aimed at legalizing the existing pole signs in the PL and PL 2 zone and proposed to add language to 21A.46.120 which included size and height requirements and the basis of the size was the sign under enforcement. The following is the zoning text that was submitted with the application:

The Salt Lake City School District would like to request to an amendment of the Sign Zoning Ordinance for Public Lands and Public Lands 2 to allow for Pole Sign: A freestanding sign other than a monument sign, erected and maintained on a mast(s) or poles(s) and not attached to any building. It is recommended that is amendment be associated with Public Lands greater than 2 acres. The standards would be maximum area per sign being 180 square feet per gross sign face. 540 square feet for the structure. Maximum height of freestanding sign is 30 feet. No sign projection over the property line. Number of signs permitted is 1 pole sign which allows 4 sign panels per sign face, 1 of which may be an electronic changeable copy sign and 1 logo sign. (12 total signs for a triangular pole). The Salt Lake City School District has 25 schools that currently have marquees on their campuses. All the campuses are over 2 acres. The schools are vital members of the communities. The signs is an important tool to regularly communicate essential information to the communities. All of the schools are currently located on Public Lands. The Salt Lake City School District recommends this amendment so to maintain this essential tool for neighborhoods.

Staff reviewed the proposed text and found that schools are located in many different zones, not just PL and PL-2. The initial proposal also would have limited the placements of school signs to school property greater than 2 acres, but not all of the schools are located on properties that large due to property line configurations. After working with staff, the applicant revised their proposal to allow signs based on land use rather than by zone and amend section 21A.46.052. They additionally expanded their request to private schools. The following is their current proposed text:



AUXILIARY SERVICES  
995 West 2480 South  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119  
801.974.8367

The Salt Lake City School District would like to request an amendment of the Sign Zoning Ordinance to allow for pole signs on public and private school campuses. Regardless of the zoning district, freestanding signs on public and private school property must comply with the following:

- i. The maximum area per sign at 180 square feet per gross sign face.
- ii. The maximum size is 540 square feet of the structure
- iii. The maximum height of a freestanding sign is 30 feet.
- iv. No signs will be allowed to project the project over the property line.
- v. The number of signs permitted is one pole sign, which allows four sign panels per sign face, one of which may be an electronic changeable copy sign, and one logo sign. (12 total signs for a triangular pole).

The Salt Lake City School District recommends this amendment so to maintain essential communication for neighborhoods.

Staff reviewed the applicant's proposed zoning language and drafted recommended text to clarify the regulations. Staff's recommendation also provides additional limitations in an effort to mitigate potential impacts in residential areas. Staff's recommended zoning text is in [Attachment A](#).

The following provides a summary of the proposal:

### **Placement of the Text in the Code**

The sign ordinance is structured in a manner that separates allowed sign types by specific zoning districts. The initial proposal was to add regulations to the tables that regulate signs allowed in the PL and PL-2 zoning districts. Staff found that some schools are in zoning districts other than the PL and PL-2 zones and the table for each one of those zones would need to be amended. Unfortunately, not all of the sign tables are formatted in the same manner, so it would be difficult to restructure every table to allow the signs and this does not seem necessary since the allowance is for one particular land use – schools. Therefore, Staff recommends that the proposed zoning text is placed in a section of the sign code that exempts signs from specific criteria in the code, but still requires fees and permits. The zoning language is structured in a way that provides the dimensional regulations for pole signs on school properties, regardless of the zoning district where the schools are located.

### **Signs Allowed on Public and Private Schools**

The initial proposal was to simply allow pole signs in the PL and PL-2 zoning districts. This would have allowed signs on all land uses in those zones, but the intention was to allow pole signs on school property only because the signs are put in place as a community service. They provide information to the public on upcoming events at that particular school. Staff worked with the applicant and developed code language that would allow pole signs on public and private school properties only. The following are the definitions of these land uses:

- **SCHOOL, K - 12 PRIVATE:** A private institution of learning or instruction primarily catering to minors, which is licensed at such facility by either the city or the state of Utah. The definition includes nursery schools, kindergarten, elementary schools, junior high schools, middle high schools, senior high schools, or any special institution of learning under the jurisdiction of the state department of education, but not including professional and vocational schools, charm schools, dancing schools, music schools or similar limited schools nor public or private universities or colleges.
- **SCHOOL, K - 12 PUBLIC:** A public institution of learning or instruction primarily catering to minors, which is licensed at such facility by either the city or the state of Utah. The definition includes nursery schools, kindergarten, elementary schools, junior high schools, middle high schools, senior high schools, or any special institution of learning under the jurisdiction of the state department of education, but not including professional and vocational schools, charm schools, dancing schools, music schools or similar limited schools nor public or private universities or colleges.

There are currently 28 public schools and seven private schools that meet the definitions above. This means that the proposed text amend would affect only 35 properties in the City.

### **Number of Signs Allowed**

There are currently 10 schools with pole signs on school property. There were no schools that staff observed that have more than one pole sign. It is Staff's recommendation that only one pole sign is allowed.

### **Allowed Size**

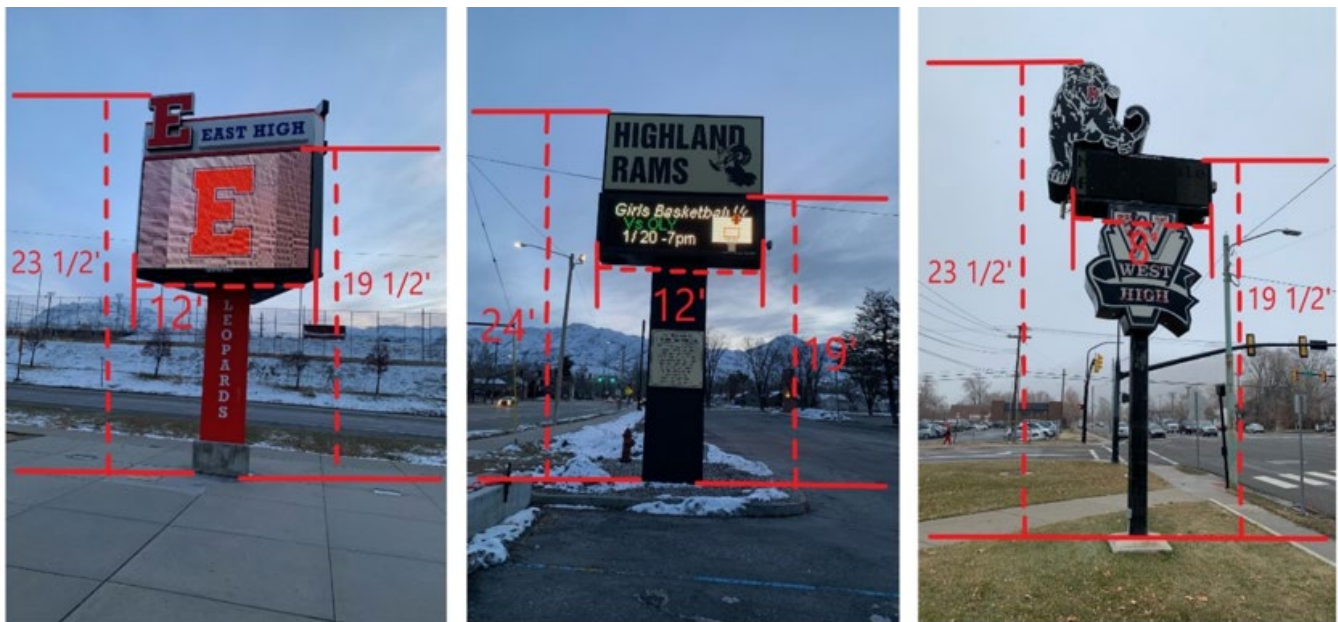
The applicant's proposal would allow pole signs with 540 square feet of sign face area at all school locations. Staff recommends limiting the allowable size of the signs based on the type of street the sign is located along. The following summarizes the size regulations:

- All pole signs on school properties could have up to three sides. Each side is considered a sign face. The sign face does not include the pole or other support structure.
- If the sign is located along a street designated as a “local” street, the maximum combined sign area (the combined area all sign faces) is 180 square feet. Local streets are typically located in lower scale neighborhoods.
- If the sign is located along an arterial or collector street, the maximum allowable combined sign area is 540 square feet.

Staff is of the opinion that the proposed sign regulations would minimize visual impacts in lower scale neighborhoods while allowing larger signs that can be more easily seen along heavier trafficked streets.

### Allowed Height

The applicant’s proposal is to allow pole signs up to 30 feet in height. Staff asked the applicant to provide measurements of the signs currently on-site for reference. The drawings below show that the height of the tallest existing signs is under 25 feet. The signs shown below are located along an arterial or collector street.



Staff recommends that the Planning Commission set the maximum height of a pole sign at 15 feet on local streets, which are typically in lower scale neighborhoods and then allow pole signs up to 25 feet in height along collector and arterial streets. Minimizing the sign height on local streets helps to alleviate the impacts of a pole signs on neighborhoods and residential areas.

This street view [shows the current signs. This is a visual representation of what a sign next to a collector or arterial may look like on school property at the maximum allowances recommended by staff in the proposed text.



The 25-foot height allowance for pole signs on collector and arterial streets is consistent with the allowable height for pole signs in most of the City’s zoning districts where pole signs are allowed. (See table below).

**Pole Sign Allowances in Other Zones**

The allowance for pole signs in other districts is shown for reference in the table below:

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Maximum Area Per Sign Face</b>	<b>Maximum Height</b>
<b>CS</b>	75 square feet	25 feet
<b>CC</b>	75 square feet	25 feet
<b>CSHBD</b>	75 square feet for a single business, 100 square feet for multiple businesses	25 feet
<b>CG</b>	1 square foot per linear foot of street frontage; 200 square feet maximum for a single business, 300 square feet maximum for multiple businesses	35 feet
<b>R-MU-35, R-MU-45, R-MU, AND MU DISTRICTS</b>	75 square feet	25 feet
<b>CB</b>	75 square feet for a single business. 100 square feet for multiple businesses	25 feet

**On-Premise Advertising Only**

Staff’s recommended text states that that the signs cannot be used for off-premise advertising. On-premises signs are those that contain advertisements for the place where they are located.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is in support of the recommendation with a few modifications. The size and height of the sign would be regulated based on the type of street the sign is located on. The signs would be required to meet the general standards for construction, which already regulate aspects such as clearance, maintenance, and lighting, as well as any additional requirements. The pole signs would not be allowed to be used for off-premise advertising. Staff's proposed text is in [Attachment A](#).

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The key considerations have been identified through the analysis of the project and include:

1. Public Process
2. Master Plan Considerations
3. Standards for General Amendments

### **Consideration 1: Public Process**

Planning staff advertised an open house to solicit public feedback and sent a letter to each community council. The Glendale Community Council supported the amendment. On December 12th, both staff and the applicant attended the Sugarhouse Community Council meeting. Following the Community Council meeting, the consensus was that there should be standards for the signs to permit them legally, and that the signs are appreciated by the public because they provide a service to students and parents by providing information in a timely and convenient manner about events and other useful information.

### **Consideration 2: Compliance with Master Plan Policies**

Plan Salt Lake (2015)

The proposed text amendment adheres to the initiatives within Plan Salt Lake, a citywide plan that outlines the City's overall vision for the next 25 years. The amendment supports the vision of neighborhoods that provide a safe environment, opportunity for social interaction, and services needed for the wellbeing of the community therein. Schools are frequently regarded as cultural resources, as well as places of learning and social interaction. Active communication with the public about ongoing events is a resource for residents.

The following are initiatives this amendment helps to achieve:

- Neighborhoods: Promote accessible neighborhood services and amenities, including parks, natural lands, and schools.
- Equity  
Provide and promote clear and effective communication.
- Arts and Culture
- Small local venues and events are equally important to our quality of life. Whether it is a block party, gallery strolls, or live music at a restaurant, bar, or park, the intimacy of experiencing local art and culture is a defining element of our neighborhoods.

### **Consideration 3: Compliance with the Standards for General Amendments**

Planning Staff reviewed the proposal against adopted policies and regulations and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission. The below are criteria used to analyze a proposed zoning text amendment:

1. Whether a proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the City as stated through its various adopted planning documents.
2. Whether a proposed text amendment furthers the specific purpose statements of the zoning ordinance.

3. a proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes and provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards; and
4. The extent to which a proposed text amendment implements the best current, professional practices of urban planning and design.

The proposed zoning text amendment generally complies with the requirements as shown in [Attachment C](#).

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Planning Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration as part of the final decision on this petition. The City Council will hold a briefing and additional public hearing on the proposed changes. The City Council may make modifications to the proposal and approve or deny the proposed changes. If ultimately approved, the changes would be incorporated into the City Zoning Code and development would be required to follow the new regulation.

# ATTACHMENT A – Staff Proposed Text

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## **21A.46.052: SIGNS EXEMPT FROM SPECIFIC CRITERIA EXCEPT FEES AND PERMITS:**

A: Signs within open-air malls, stadiums, or other enclosed spaces that do not have a roof but are otherwise physically confined and separated from the public street right-of-way are required to obtain sign permits and pay fees to ensure public safety and compliance with the City's Building Code. Such signs are subject to Sign Ordinance regulations unless a sign master plan agreement was specifically considered as part of a planned development as outlined in [chapter 21A.55](#) of this title or was specifically authorized through the design review process as outlined in [chapter 21A.59](#) of this title. The sign master plan agreement shall only be authorized for signage within the open-air mall or stadium that is not oriented to the public street. Signage oriented to a public street or to a surface parking lot is specifically not exempt from Sign Ordinance requirements and not subject to modification through a sign master plan agreement. (Ord. 14-19, 2019)

B. Pole Signs on School Property: Pole signs on property used for K-12 Public School or K-12 Private School are allowed regardless of the zoning district. Pole signs on K-12 Public School or K-12 Private School property are permitted provided such signs comply with the following requirements:

1. The maximum number of signs permitted is one pole sign;
2. The maximum height of a freestanding pole sign is 15 feet, except that pole signs on the property along a collector or arterial street may be a maximum height of 25 feet;
3. There is no minimum setback requirement; however, all portions of the sign must be located on school property. No portion of the sign may overhang onto the public right-of-way
4. The sign will be allowed to have a maximum of three sign faces. For pole signs located on school properties, the sign face is the total sign area of each side of the sign. A sign face may include multiple separate sign panels;
5. The total combined sign face areas of a pole sign shall not exceed 180 square feet, except that pole signs on the property along a collector or arterial street may have a maximum total combined sign face area of 540 square feet;
6. No sign may be used as an off premises sign; and
7. The pole sign is subject to all other requirements as stated in this chapter and all applicable zoning overlay requirements.



# **ATTACHMENT B – Applicant Info and Narrative**

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# Zoning Amendment

SALT LAKE CITY PLANNING

Amend the text of the Zoning Ordinance     Amend the Zoning Map

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Received By: <b>Anna Anglin</b>	Date Received: <b>03/03/2021</b>	Project #: <b>PLNPCM2021-00190</b>
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Name or Section/s of Zoning Amendment: **SLC School Signs - Zoning Text Amendment**

**PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION**

Address of Subject Property (or Area):  
All Salt Lake City School District schools

Name of Applicant: <b>Paul Schulte</b>	Phone: <b>801-974-8372</b>
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Address of Applicant:  
995 West Beardsley Place

E-mail of Applicant: <b>Paul.Schulte@slcschools.org</b>	Cell/Fax:
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Applicant's Interest in Subject Property:  
 Owner     Contractor     Architect     Other:

Name of Property Owner (if different from applicant):  
Board of Education of Salt Lake City

E-mail of Property Owner:	Phone:
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**Please note** that additional information may be required by the project planner to ensure adequate information is provided for staff analysis. All information required for staff analysis will be copied and made public, including professional architectural or engineering drawings, for the purposes of public review by any interested party.

**AVAILABLE CONSULTATION**

If you have any questions regarding the requirements of this application, please contact Salt Lake City Planning Counter at [zoning@slcgov.com](mailto:zoning@slcgov.com) prior to submitting the application.

**REQUIRED FEE**

Map Amendment: filing fee of **\$1,058** plus **\$121** per acre in excess of one acre  
Text Amendment: filing fee of **\$1,058**, plus fees for newspaper notice.  
Plus, additional fee for mailed public notices. Noticing fees will be assessed after the application is submitted.

**SIGNATURE**

➔ If applicable, a notarized statement of consent authorizing applicant to act as an agent will be required.

Signature of Owner or Agent:	Date:
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## SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Staff Review

**1. Project Description** (please electronically attach additional sheets. See [Section 21A.50](#) for the Amendments ordinance.)



A statement declaring the purpose for the amendment.



A description of the proposed use of the property being rezoned.



List the reasons why the present zoning may not be appropriate for the area.



Is the request amending the Zoning Map?  
If so, please list the parcel numbers to be changed.



Is the request amending the text of the Zoning Ordinance?  
If so, please include language and the reference to the Zoning Ordinance to be changed.

## WHERE TO FILE THE COMPLETE APPLICATION

Apply online through the [Citizen Access Portal](#). There is a [step-by-step guide](#) to learn how to submit online.

## INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge that Salt Lake City requires the items above to be submitted before my application can be processed. I understand that Planning will not accept my application unless all of the following items are included in the submittal package.

The Salt Lake City School District would like to request to an amendment of the Sign Zoning Ordinance for Public Lands and Public Lands 2 to allow for Pole Sign: A freestanding sign other than a monument sign, erected and maintained on a mast(s) or poles(s) and not attached to any building. It is recommended that is amendment be associated with Public Lands greater than 2 acres. The standards would be maximum area per sign being 180 square feet per gross sign face. 540 square feet for the structure. Maximum height of freestanding sign is 30 feet. No sign projection over the property line. Number of signs permitted is 1 pole sign which allows 4 sign panels per sign face, 1 of which may be an electronic changeable copy sign and 1 logo sign. (12 total signs for a triangular pole). The Salt Lake City School District has 25 schools that currently have marquees on their campuses. All the campuses are over 2 acres. The schools are vital members of the communities. The signs is an important tool to regularly communicate essential information to the communities. All of the schools are currently located on Public Lands. The Salt Lake City School District recommends this amendment so to maintain this essential tool for neighborhoods.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Backman Elementary	601 N 1500 W
Beacon Heights Elementary	1850 S 2500 E
Bonneville Elementary	1145 S 1900 E
Dilworth Elementary	1953 S 2100 E
Edison Elementary	430 South Cheyenne St
Emerson Elementary	1017 East Harrison Ave
Ensign Elementary	775 E 12th Ave
Escalante Elementary	1810 W 900 N
Franklin Elementary	1115 W 300 S
Hawthorne Elementary	1675 S 600 E
Highland Park Elementary	1738 E 2700 S
Indian Hills Elementary	2496 East St Mary Drive
Liberty Elementary	1085 S Roberta St
Mary W. Jackson Elementary	750 W 200 N
Meadowlark Elementary	497 N Morton Dr
M. Lynn Bennion Elementary	429 S 800 E
Mountain View Elementary	1380 S 1340 W
Newman Elementary	1269 N Colorado St
North Star Elementary	1545 N Morton Dr
Parkview Elementary	970 S Emery St
Riley Elementary	1410 S 800 W
Rose Park Elementary	1105 W 1000 N
Uintah Elementary	1571 E 1300 S
Wasatch Elementary	30 R Street
Washington Elementary	420 N 200 W
Whittier Elementary	1600 S 300 E
Nibley Park School	2785 S 800 E
Clayton Middle School	1470 S 1900 E
Glendale Middle School	1430 E Andrew Ave
Hillside Middle School	1825 S Nevada St
Northwest Middle School	1730 W 1700 N
Salt Lake Center for Science Education-Bryant	40 S 800 E
East High School	840 S 1300 E
Highland High School	2166 S 1700 E
Horizonte Instruction and Training Center	1234 S Main St
Innovations Early College High School	1633 S Edison St
West High School	241 N 300 W
Open Classroom	134 N D Street
Salt Lake Center for Science Education	1400 W Goodwin Ave
Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts	2291 S 2000 E

The Salt Lake City School District would like to request an amendment of the Sign Zoning Ordinance to allow for pole signs on public and private school campuses. Regardless of the zoning district, freestanding signs on public and private school property must comply with the following:

- i. The maximum area per sign at 180 square feet per gross sign face.
- ii. The maximum size is 540 square feet of the structure
- iii. The maximum height of a freestanding sign is 30 feet.
- iv. No signs will be allowed to project the project over the property line.
- v. The number of signs permitted is one pole sign, which allows four sign panels per sign face, one of which may be an electronic changeable copy sign, and one logo sign. (12 total signs for a triangular pole).

The Salt Lake City School District recommends this amendment so to maintain essential communication for neighborhoods.

## ATTACHMENT C – Standards for General Amendments

**21A.50.050:** A decision to amend the text of this title or the zoning map by general amendment is a matter committed to the legislative discretion of the city council and is not controlled by any one standard. In making its decision concerning a proposed text amendment, the City Council should consider the following factors:

FACTOR	RATIONALE	FINDING
Whether a proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the City as stated through its various adopted planning documents.	The text amendment is consistent with Plan Salt Lake's policies and not contrary to initiatives outlined in the plan. The text amendment fosters local communication, encourages neighborhood gatherings for social contact, and provides public access to this information, fostering equity. Consideration 3 describes this.	Complies
Whether a proposed text amendment furthers the specific purpose statements of the zoning ordinance.	<p>The Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance is stated in Section 21A.02.030 and says:</p> <p>“The purpose of this title is to promote the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of Salt Lake City, to implement the adopted plans of the City, and to carry out the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Development and Management Act, title 10, chapter 9, of the Utah Code Annotated or its successor, and other relevant statutes.”</p> <p>The proposed amendment would promote safety and convenience for local business owners and residences by allowing schools to place signs along the street frontage that notify individuals of events and news related to the school. The proposal also implements Plan Salt Lake as stated in the factor above.</p>	Complies
Whether a proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes and provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards; and	The pole signs will be subject to all applicable zoning overlay requirements.	Complies
The extent to which a proposed text amendment implements the best current, professional practices of urban planning and design.	There are now existing signs on school property that are not permitted. Staff's proposed text sets standards to control urban design, pedestrian scale, size, and orientation, and improve neighborhood communication for students, parents, and residents.	Complies

## **ATTACHMENT D – Public Process and Comments**

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The following is a list of public meetings that have been held, and other public input opportunities, related to the proposed project since the applications were submitted:

### **Recognized Organization Notification – Tuesday, November 15, 2022**

Notice of the project was provided to all Community Council Chairs. We received one letter of support from the Glendale Community Council. Staff and the applicant were asked to attend the Sugarhouse Community Council meeting on Monday, December 12, 2022. Feedback was generally positive, and the applicant answered all the Community Councils' questions and concerns.

### **Early Notification to Property Owners and City Councils –Citywide Text Amendment**

The project was placed on an open house, and a notice was provided via listserv because the amendment has a city-wide impact. Staff informed all billboard companies of the amendment as part of the public engagement process with early notification and notice of the public hearing.

### **City Open House – Tuesday, November 15, 2022**

Staff hosted an online Open House to solicit public comments on the proposal. The Online Open House period started on Tuesday, November 15, 2022, and ended on Friday, December 30, 2022.

### **Public Hearing – February 8, 2023**

Notice of the public hearing for the Planning Commission Meeting. Public notice was posted on City and State websites and the Planning Division listserv.

### **Public Comments**

At the time of this staff report, we received one public comment from Scenic Utah, and it is attached below. If any comments are received after the publication of the Staff Report, they will be forwarded to the Commission and included in the public record.



**From:** [Turner Bitton](#)  
**To:** [Booth, Meagan](#)  
**Subject:** (EXTERNAL) Re: Salt Lake School District Signs Text Amendment Early Notification  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 11:17:30 PM

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Hi Meagan,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this proposal. Please consider this email a letter of support from the Glendale Neighborhood Council.

Thanks,  
Turner C. Bitton (he/him)  
Chair, Glendale Neighborhood Council  
(801) 564-3860  
[www.glendaleslc.org](http://www.glendaleslc.org)

On Nov 15, 2022, at 12:46 PM, Booth, Meagan <[Meagan.Booth@slcgov.com](mailto:Meagan.Booth@slcgov.com)> wrote:

Hello to all the Community Council Chairs,  
The purpose of this email is to inform you of a text amendment initiated by the Salt Lake City School District. This is a city-wide text amendment. As a recognized community organization, you have 45 days to provide comments on the proposed petition. The public comment period ends on **Friday, December 30, 2022**. This project is also scheduled for an open house, which will be posted online and run until the Planning Commission Hearing which has not yet been scheduled.

I have attached the following materials for your review:

1. Notice to All Community Council Chairs
2. Application
3. Proposed Text Amendment

Please let me know if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you!

**MEAGAN BOOTH**  
Principal Planner  
Planning Division

**DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY and NEIGHBORHOODS**  
SALT LAKE CITY CORPORATION

TEL 801-535-7213  
EMAIL [meagan.booth@slcgov.com](mailto:meagan.booth@slcgov.com)

[www.slc.gov/planning](http://www.slc.gov/planning)

*Disclaimer: The Planning Division strives to give the best customer service possible and to respond to questions as accurately as possible based upon the information provided. However, answers given at the counter and/or prior to application are not binding and they are not a substitute for formal Final Action, which may only occur in response to a complete application to the Planning*

*Division. Those relying on verbal input or preliminary written feedback do so at their own risk and do not vest any property with development rights.*

<Requested Sign Zoning Amendment.docx><Application - SLC School Signs  
Text Amend - PLNPCM2021-00190.pdf><Notice Letter to Community Councils  
School District Signs.docx>



**TO:** Meagan Booth, Principal Planner – Salt Lake City  
**FROM:** Ralph Becker – Scenic Utah Chair  
Kate Kopischke – Scenic Utah Director  
**DATE:** Dec. 29, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** Sign Zoning Ordinance Amendment Request by SLC School District

Scenic Utah appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Salt Lake City School District’s request to amend the Sign Zoning Ordinance to allow for pole signs on public and private school campuses.

Scenic Utah is a nonprofit organization working to protect the visual qualities of our communities and landscapes. We advocate for sensible outdoor advertising laws and policies, and we work with towns, cities, businesses, community groups and individuals on a range of issues related to the impacts of signs and billboards.

Since launching in 2018, we have received multiple requests from individuals and businesses throughout Utah for support in opposing the placement of digital and other pole signs in neighborhoods and small business districts. In each case, the signage was installed with no prior consultation or engagement with impacted residents and businesses.

One example is Salt Lake Regional Medical Center’s placement in 2020 of four digital signs on each corner of its property, which encompasses an entire city block in the South Temple historic district. Nearby residents who contacted Scenic Utah were outraged by the intrusion of flashing light into their homes, and by sign owners’ failure to consult or notify them prior to the signs going in.

In addition to Salt Lake City, we have received similar complaints and requests for help from residents or businesses owners in Clearfield, Orem, Salem, Vernal, South Salt Lake, Ogden, St. George, and Millcreek.

Scenic Utah supports the right of any business or organization to advertise goods and services and post information relevant to the community. And we appreciate the School District’s interest in using dynamic, digital media to “maintain essential communication for neighborhoods.” Should the City agree to change its Zoning Sign Ordinance, however, and allow the school district to erect pole signs, we urge you to consider the following comments and suggestions for minimizing the many potential negative impacts of digital and other types of signage.

- Sign sizes as indicated in the proposed amendment are far larger than necessary to convey information to a school community or neighborhood. Should signs be built to the maximum proposed sizes – 180 square-foot sign face, 540 square foot structure, and 30 feet in height – would

be visual intrusions by most community standards, and unnecessarily large for the district's stated purpose.

- Limitations that reflect neighborhood character, values, and aesthetics should be established for size, location, height, brightness, dwell / twirl times, and hours of operation.
  - If freestanding signs are necessary, Scenic Utah recommends they be pedestal signs, no higher than necessary for visibility from nearby roads and sidewalks. In most cases 15 feet is a reasonable height limit for this purpose. Signs attached to buildings typically are more aesthetically appropriate and require fewer materials and building / maintenance costs.
  - The [photograph of the sign depicted your Petition Number PLNCPM2021-00190 document](#) reflects an appropriate design and good starting point for establishing sign standards on school campuses.
- Messages should reflect public, school-related information only, and commercial advertising should be prohibited.
  - Schools seeking to place signs on their campuses should be required to undertake an impact assessment that includes:
    - The signs' likely digital carbon footprint – or amount of additional fossil-fuel generated electricity that the signs will require.
    - Identification of and consultation with neighbors and businesses who may be impacted by the signage.
    - Accurate renderings of the proposed signage that impacted residents and City officials can review and amend accordingly.
  - Permits for new school signs should be issued on a case-by-case basis, subject to outcomes of the completed assessments and public input from surrounding communities.

We would be happy to discuss these comments and suggestions with the Planning Commission and City, and to provide any additional input at your request. And we thank you for considering Scenic Utah's comments.

Respectfully submitted:



Ralph Becker  
Chair



Kate Kopischke  
Director

cc: Community Council Chairs

## **ATTACHMENT E – Department Review Comments**

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This proposal was reviewed by the following departments: No further comments or concerns had been received at the time the report was written.

### **Engineering:**

No Comments

### **Building:**

No building code issues with the proposed text amendment.

### **Fire:**

No comments on the proposed amendment; however, comments may arise with permit and construction document submittal and code compliance review.

### **Public Utilities:**

Public Utilities does not have any issues with this amendment.

### **Transportation**

The Transportation Division did not have any comments on the proposal.

### **City Attorney:**

I don't have any concerns with the District's proposal on legal grounds, but I offer the following suggested constraints to address areas that have been problematic for the City in the past:

- Limit nuisance lighting on adjacent property (limit overall brightness or require dimming the lights after sunset)
- Prohibit off-premises advertising.
- Designate setbacks.
- The District's proposal in terms of size of the signs appears comparable to the largest signs that the City allows in commercial districts, but not in residential or even mixed-use districts. thus, the District's proposal could be problematic on a city-wide basis.