Creating Opportunities: The Outdoor Advertising Industry and Salt Lake City

June 2022

21 June, 2022

Outdoor Advertising Industry/Developer Group/Grand Boulevards Outline

Dear Salt Lake City Corporation,

Thank you for your time and attention during these months of meetings regarding the state of affairs around the current Salt Lake City billboard regulations. With the exciting development taking place in our wonderful city, we all recognize the unique opportunity to create a win-win scenario for all the citizens and stakeholders of Salt Lake City.

Included herein, is a description of the critical issues and some proposed solutions requiring action around the topic of Outdoor Advertising in Salt Lake City. Likekly, incorporating these solutions as changes to the current Salt Lake City Corporation (SLC) Off-Premises Sign (Billboards) Ordinance is the most efficient way to implement these improvements. Addressing these issues will provide value to the residents, Salt Lake City Corporation and the businesses of our fine city. This group will continue to provide suggested specs and guidelines for how to create value and a convenient workflow for the Outdoor Industry and Salt Lake City Corporation as this process conitnues.

The major findings of the Outdoor Development Group are a new Off Premises Sign Ordinance Overlay Zone should be created for the area described below. The following planning concepts need to be incorporated within the overlay zone to provide the benefits mentioned above:

1. Greater flexibility regarding geographic placement (zones, heights, sizes, spacing setbacks & configuration: poles, walls, roofs).

2. The re-introduction of digital outdoor advertising faces.

3. An improved process to manage the improvement of and ongoing use of billboards with a shared creative vision around maximizing the value of existing billboard inventory.

The introduction of these planning concepts in SLC's Off-Premises Sign Ordinance, will allow continued development of commercial and residential building stock without the impediments and restrictions caused by certain provisions of the current SLC code. Implementing these improvements will allow Billboards to remain a part of developments, after being renovated into modern architectural forms that are compatible with their quickly-changing surroundings. The net result will be more desirable developments and increased economic activity in Salt Lake City. In addition, the reintroduction of digital sign faces in Salt Lake City will allow the Outdoor Advertising industry to provide public service and emergency messaging at little or no cost to Salt Lake City Corporation, other public safety agencies, charitable services providers and the general public.

It is this group's hope that this overlay provides the framework for future improvements in the regulation of Billboard signage. The goal in this first step is to keep things simple and provide immediately positive outcomes. Later we hope these planning concepts serve as a model for more areas throughout the state of Utah.

This working group suggests the following topics as the core content needed to update the SLC code to effectuate the benefits discussed herein. The latter pages also provide examples of best practices around the state and the country where these concepts have been successfully implemented to produce positive outcomes. These best management practices bring enhanced property development opportunities, continued strong business for the Outdoor Advertising Industry and help to create a sense of place.

We believe addressing the following topics are critical to eliminating the existing problems listed above and present a path to more economically efficient and attractive development:

- **Overlay Boundaries**: As the first step of the process we propose an overlay zone in which these concepts can be implemented to both existing Billboards and Billboards that are relocated in the future. We propose both sides of the following streets:

  Western Boundary - properties on the west side and adjacent to 1-15.

  Eastern Boundary - properties on the east side of and adjacent to State Street.

  North Boundary - properties on the north side of and adjacent to 400th South.

  Southern Boundary - properties on the south side of and adjacent to 600 South.

- **Signage Sizes**:
  The proportions of billboard sign faces are critical to creating attractive, efficient billboards. Billboard owners will make significant financial, material and construction investments to facilitate quality Billboards in this Overlay Zone. These regulations–and the below mentioned specs–will remain compliant with the regulations of UDOT.

  300 square foot and 672 square foot sign faces are the industry standard. It will be crucial to keep these specs and the corresponding aspect ratio in mind during these discussions.

- **Configuration**:
  Greater flexibility regarding sign configuration will result in more and better development and more aesthetically modern signs and sign structures. Amending the SLC ordinance to allow placement in the following manners: poles, roofs, walls, pole combinations—and to allow the use of digital signs will allow these benefits to be obtained. The placement and relocation of signs shall be flexible insofar as landowners and Outdoor Industry are in agreement on a case-by-case basis.

- **Spacing Flexibility:**
  The overlay plan will seek more flexible spacing limitations and will look to work collaboratively to create a better overall outcome for all stakeholders.

  In order to remove impediments to smart development, it is suggested that signs within the Overlay continue to comply with current UDOT spacing minimums and that SLC requirements simply match those of UDOT in this Overlay Zone.

- **Context:**
  Architectural and design requirements shall be created to be compatible with the surrounding development with the visibility of the outdoor advertising face(s) from the street maintained through appropriate height allowances, placement and setback flexibility and other related factors.

  Goals include placement that (1) does not impede development, (2) allows for the continued operation and visibility of the billboards in this overlay zone (3) allows for beautification of The Grand Boulevards, (4) fosters modernization (5) provides continued value to billboard owners and (6) provides long term growth of the tax base to the benefit of Salt Lake City.

We hope that the above issues and suggestions provide a strong framework for swift win-win outcomes for Salt Lake City's residents, developers, Billboard Owners and Salt Lake City Corporation. We sincerely hope that this is the first step in an improved Grand Boulevards in Salt Lake City. In closing, we would like to thank The Mayor's Office and specifically Chief Staff, Rachel Otto. Rachel's strong leadership motivated the different industries and the public sector involved in this process to work collaboratively to create these suggested planning concepts.

Very Sincerely Yours,

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Proposed Overlay Zone

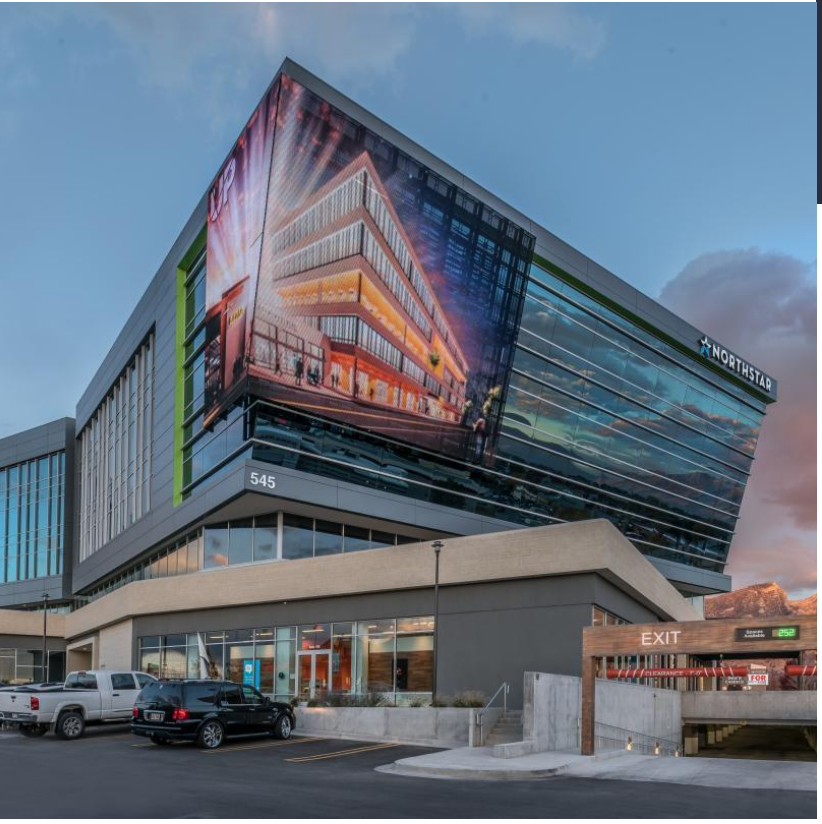
Current Limitations (and the outcomes)

- Loss in development potential
- Difficult for developers
- Very costly

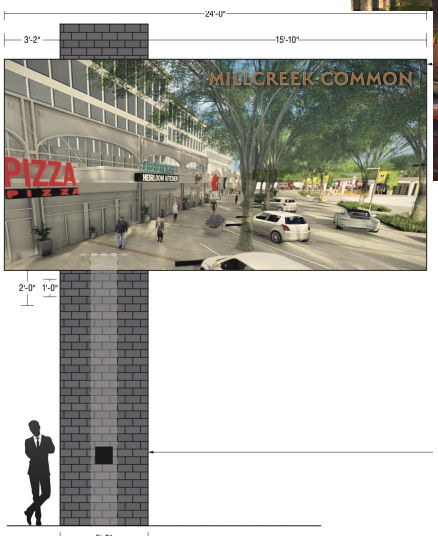
- Inability to modernize
- Holding back development
- Inflexible Regs lock up land

- Haphazard placement
- Un-maximized entry to SLC
- Un-optimized aesthetics

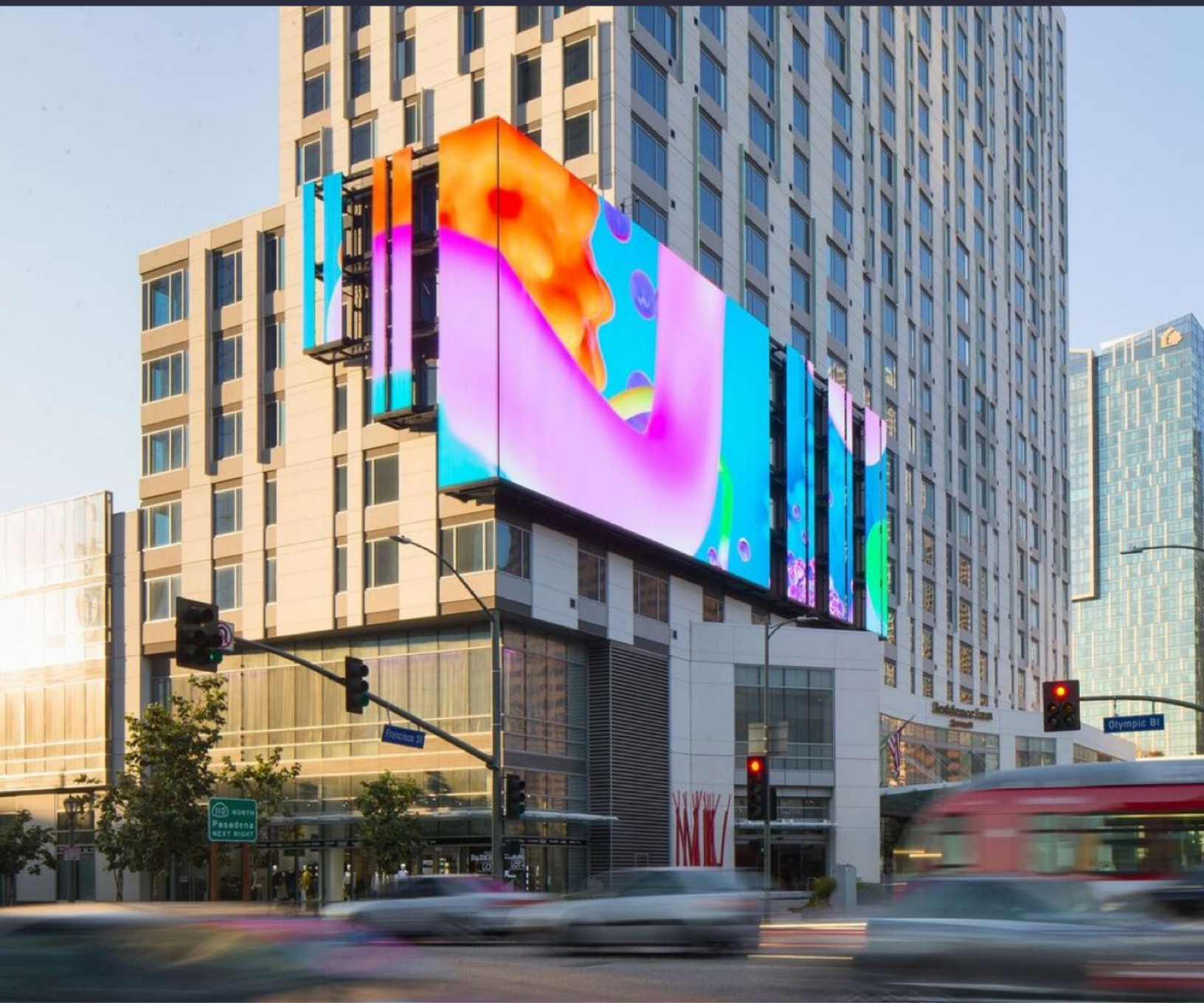
Where We Can Be



- Integration into structures
- Aesthetically Pleasing
- Increased / Maintained Inventory



- Many different placement options
- Cost Effective Options
- Works with Static or Digital

- Flexibility in placement
- Unlocking Development
- Increased Tax Base

Thank You