



# PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

## STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: 12/05/2024

Agenda Item: 3R

---

**TO:** Planning and Zoning Commission

**THROUGH:** Chris M. Jacques, AICP, Planning Director

**FROM:** Lorie Dever, Deputy Director  
Sarah Dircks, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:** Code Amendment: Downtown Code (TA24-04)

### ***PURPOSE***

---

This is a city-initiated Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to Sections 21-200 “Definitions”, 21-600 “Special Uses, Districts and Overlays”, and 21-700 “Signage” of the Zoning Ordinance. The purposed modification to each section is summarized below:

- Add and update existing definitions within Section 21-200 to align with modernized land use categories identified within Section 21-600;
- Within Section 21-600; rename the Old Town Mixed Use (OTMU) District as the Downtown (D) District, and integrate parks and open space into the two updated mixed-use subdistricts within the Downtown (D) District, along with modernize the land use matrix; and,
- Within Section 21-700 update sign related definitions and sign allowances within the downtown area to allow for distinct signage, encourage sidewalk canopies, to recognize existing conditions downtown.

If approved, staff believe these code modifications will support and further advance the City’s Economic Development and Revitalization efforts to activate Downtown Peoria.

### ***BACKGROUND***

---

Downtown has long been identified as an important revitalization and redevelopment priority for the City of Peoria. Over the last several years, the city has continued to make meaningful investments and improvements to reposition Downtown for redevelopment by strategically assembling land and refining redevelopment concepts. These efforts have been informed through community input and have helped shape the development opportunities on the horizon within the Downtown. To this end, it is important to ensure the associated land use matrix and sign regulations for Downtown Peoria are recalibrated and restructured appropriately in support of these efforts.

### ***PROPOSED REGULATIONS***

---

The purpose of this city-initiated amendment is to help implement the Peoria General Plan vision for Downtown as a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use area for civic, historic, residential, commercial, and employment uses. In particular, this code amendment seeks to facilitate greater interaction between businesses and the pedestrian realm through the proposed changes to create distinction in signage within Downtown.

Within Section 21-700 of the Peoria Zoning Ordinance the revised code aims to address three (3) existing sign types: Projecting Signage, Canopy Signage, and Temporary Signage (Exhibit C). Through additional definitions, clarity is established distinguishing the function, placement, lighting, and size of various projecting sign types. By

modifying how the maximum sign area allowance is calculated, business owners are incentivized to enhance the pedestrian experience by providing canopies and awnings over sidewalks as a means to take advantage of the additional signage allowance provided. Lastly, acknowledging right-of-way constraints for existing businesses in Downtown, revisions are strategically proposed for temporary A-frame signs, granting businesses in downtown the same allowances to attract and interact with pedestrians along the sidewalk.

Changes within Section 21-600 “Special Uses, Districts and Overlays” focus on simplifying the naming convention, and unify downtown. More specifically renaming the Old Town Mixed Use (OTMU) District as the Downtown (D) District and encapsulating the existing downtown zoning districts into two (2) updated sub-zoning districts Commercial Mixed-Use (D/CM) and Residential Mixed-Use (D/RM). Changes within Section 21-200 “Definitions” seek to modernize and realign definitions with uses and terms established and cross-referenced within Section 21-600 “Special Uses, Districts and Overlays”.

These changes were summarized and presented during the public meetings noted below. The draft code was posted to the city’s website. Feedback received during study sessions has been integrated into the final draft code included in Exhibit A through Exhibit C.

### ***KEY FINDINGS***

---

- Where appropriate, the revised code provides additional allowances for downtown to incentivize businesses to create an inviting pedestrian space keeping with the General Plan vision of Downtown as a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use area for civic, historic, residential, commercial, and employment uses.
- The proposed changes are sensitive to existing business and residents while recognizing existing constraints presented to existing businesses.

### ***COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT***

---

#### *Public Meetings:*

- Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on April 18, 2024.
- Historic Preservation Commission Study Session on May 8, 2024.
- Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on June 6, 2024.
- Open House Meeting held on November 7, 2024.
- Planning and Zoning Commission Study Session on November 14, 2024.

#### *Public Noticing:*

The application was properly noticed pursuant to Section 21-315 of the Peoria Zoning Ordinance, which includes placing a legal ad in the Peoria Times at least 15 days prior to the Public Hearing.

#### *Support / Opposition:*

No opposition or support for this proposal was received.

***POSSIBLE ACTIONS / OPTIONS***

---

- A: Approve as recommended by staff; or
- B: Approve in part or with modifications; or
- C: Deny; or
- D: Continue action to a date certain or indefinitely.

***RECOMMENDATION***

---

Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission take the following action:

**Recommend approval of Case TA24-04 to the City Council as proposed in Exhibit A through Exhibit C.**

***STAFF CONTACT***

---

Lorie Dever  
Deputy Director  
(623)773-5168  
[Lorie.Dever@peoriaaz.gov](mailto:Lorie.Dever@peoriaaz.gov)

Sarah Dircks, MCP, AICP  
Senior Planner  
623-773-7514  
[Sarah.Dircks@peoriaaz.gov](mailto:Sarah.Dircks@peoriaaz.gov)