



**Sign Ordinance Update**  
**Summary of Small Business Outreach Meetings**  
(Meetings held on 1/19/17, 1/26/17 and 2/1/17)

Robert Ito, Economic Development Project Manager, opened the meetings and welcomed the attendees.

Christopher Baker, Development Services Director, provided an overview of the project and the purpose of the sign code update.

- Staff received guidance from the City Council to provide additional signage opportunities for businesses while maintaining an attractive, clutter-free community appearance.
- Meanwhile, the US Supreme Court decision in *Reed v Gilbert* was rendered, which significantly impacted sign regulations nation-wide. The Court stated that sign regulations need to be content-neutral and may not dictate what a sign can or cannot say.
- As such, the purpose of the update is to provide businesses with additional opportunities for high quality signage and to bring the sign ordinance into compliance with the Supreme Court decision in *Reed*.

Steve Careccia, City Planner, provided an overview of the changes to the sign ordinance.

- Proposed changes to permanent signs include:
  - Currently, a commercial center is allowed a maximum of two free-standing monument signs along a street. This will be changed to one monument sign per driveway/entrance into the center, which could allow for additional monument signs. Monument signs are also generally proposed to be larger in size.
  - Currently, internal monument signs are not allowed. These signs are proposed to be allowed in larger commercial developments to provide additional customer wayfinding.
  - More opportunities for directional signage are proposed, and larger centers with multiple businesses could benefit from such signage.
  - No significant changes are proposed to wall signs but the update is proposing to allow a minimum allocation of 35 square feet for all businesses. This will primarily benefit smaller tenants since the size of a wall sign is based on building frontage, and smaller tenants are sometimes forced to go with too small of a sign because of their lack of store frontage.
  - The placement of an electronic display on a free-standing monument sign is proposed to be allowed within the McDowell Road commercial corridor.

- Proposed changes to temporary signs include:
  - Commercial/Industrial – changing to allow temporary signs to be displayed for 30 days at a time, four times a year, for such things as special events or grand openings.
  - A-frame/Portable signs will be permitted in commercial and other non-residential areas.

## **Questions & Answers from the Meetings**

### **Are A-frame signs allowed? Where can they be located?**

Yes, A-frame/portable signs will be allowed with the updated sign ordinance. They must be located within 10 feet of the building entrance and no more than three feet from the building face.

### **Why do signs have to be at least seven feet from a window in order to not be counted as signage?**

Any visual display or text placed within six feet of a window is considered a window sign. A window sign may not be larger than 25% of the total window in which the sign is displayed. The purpose of this standard is to allow visibility into and out of a business establishment and to reduce visual clutter. The Police Department especially appreciates being able to view the inside of an establishment when they are on patrol or responding to an emergency. A window sign set back at least seven from a window should allow visibility into/out of the business and still provide effective signage. A sign that is set back at least seven feet from a window is not regulated by the sign ordinance.

### **What are the regulations for vehicle signs?**

One vehicle sign is permitted per business. The vehicle must be operable and licensed and used in the daily function of the business. The sign may not break the silhouette of the vehicle nor be illuminated or electronic. The vehicle must also be parked on a paved parking space.

### **Is Code Compliance consistent in its administration of the Ordinance?**

Yes, Code Compliance strives to treat every business and resident in a fair and equitable manner. Many times, Code Compliance Officers are responding to a formal complaint that they have received about a particular business or residence, and as such, they are required to look into the issue and seek resolution.

### **Are the fees for signs also changing?**

No, all City fees are adopted with a separate user fee ordinance. The user fee ordinance is anticipated to be updated sometime this fiscal year and sign fees will be reviewed at that time. Staff has received feedback from the business community that sign permit fees should be lowered.

**Are sail signs allowed?**

No, sail signs (a.k.a. wind sails, feather banners, flying banners) are not permitted.

**What are Multi-Family Developments allowed?**

The above-described changes to monument signs and directory signs would also benefit multi-family residential uses.

**Are inflatable signs allowed?**

Yes, with a special event as long as they are not animated.

**Are inflatable signs allowed on the roof?**

No, a sign cannot exceed the height of the building nor be in a parking space. However, they may be located in a landscape area (but not in City right-of-way).

**Are pennants allowed?**

Yes, with a special event permit or with a grand opening/special promotion temporary sign permit.

**Can signs in the historic Western Avenue Planned Area Development utilize a conventional design and lighting style?**

Conventional or modern signs are discouraged in the Western Avenue PAD. Instead, signs are encouraged to utilize architecturally compatible designs and lighting that reflect the historic nature of the buildings.

**When will this new Ordinance be implemented?**

The local business outreach meetings were the City's initial effort to get feedback on the draft. The next steps in the process include seeking input from the wider community and presenting the draft ordinance to the City Council at a worksession. Then, it will go to Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council for formal review and adoption. After the City Council has adopted the Ordinance, it will go into effect in 30 days.

The anticipated schedule for the adoption of the sign ordinance update includes:

- March 27<sup>th</sup> City Council worksession to present the preliminary draft to Council and seek feedback
- April 19<sup>th</sup> Planning & Zoning Commission public hearing to present final draft for review and recommendation
- May 22<sup>nd</sup> City Council public hearing to seek Council adoption of final draft

(Please note these dates are subject to change, so check the City's website for updates)

**Who can answer further questions should they come up?**

Please contact Steve Careccia, City Planner, at 623.882.7963 or [steve.careccia@goodyearaz.gov](mailto:steve.careccia@goodyearaz.gov).