

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM
#10-25

August 12, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor Joyce Downing and City Council members

FROM: James Hayes, Director of Planning and Development **JH**

SUBJECT: Mile High Outdoor Sign Proposal

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Staff has prepared this memorandum to update the City Council on a proposal from Mile High Outdoor for reconstruction of their off-premise advertising sign adjacent to I-25 (114th Avenue alignment) in the City of Northglenn. Earlier, in June, 2010, staff presented preliminary information to the City Council and requested direction on the best approach to analyzing the proposal.

The key points of the proposal are outlined below:

- Rebuild existing sign as a monopole (currently 2 poles) with pole covers and Northglenn logo visible from both sides
- Increase height of sign to 50-60 feet (currently 20 feet)
- Add LED digital sign faces on both sides with a changeable messages every 8-10 seconds
- Sign faces will be increased to 14 feet high by 48 feet wide (currently 11' x 36') adding 3 feet to the height and 12 feet to the width
- Northglenn would be allowed time on the LED sign for civic events, public announcements, etc. at a rate of one 7 second spot per minute (11-12% of the total time)
- Annual permit fee of \$10,000 to the City of Northglenn

The City Council referred the matter to the Planning Commission for discussion and a preliminary recommendation. Therefore, staff scheduled the proposal as a study session agenda item for the July 20 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Staff prepared a presentation on the proposal and the issues surrounding off-premise, LED digital signs. The proponent (Steve Richards) from Mile High Outdoor attended and answered many questions about the proposal.

Following the presentations and discussion, the Planning Commission unanimously agreed that the proposal had merit and should be considered by the City Council. Of particular interest to Commissioners were the following items they felt should be addressed with any agreement or ordinance change:

- Commissioners were concerned about the placement of a static "City of Northglenn" branded identification sign below the variable LED billboard that may provide the appearance of city endorsement of any advertiser on the billboard.
- Commissioners were also concerned with the notification of the residents living in the apartments adjacent to the proposed billboard location.

In preparation for the consideration of the proposal, staff attended an electronic sign seminar (hosted by APA in Northglenn) and has educated themselves about the technology, model sign codes, and CDOT rules and regulations. Staff also met with Planning Department staff from Adams County since they

recently updated their sign regulations to allow electronic signs (both on-premise and off-premise). CDOT has adopted new rules for digital billboards and the site appears to meet all of their requirements as an existing, conforming billboard that is eligible for conversion. Formal approval from CDOT will be required prior to redevelopment of the sign. The City of Northglenn Municipal Code related to off-premise advertising signs will also need to be amended to facilitate the new sign.

There are several pros and cons to be considered with this proposal as follows:

Pros

The height of the sign is increased above the roof line of the multi-family property to the south which reduces the visual pollution experienced by the apartment residents;

The City of Northglenn will benefit from fixed signage on the monopole, an allotment of time on the digital sign for civic events, and an annual permit fee of \$10,000;

The increase in the number of advertisements per hour, day, month, etc. may allow small businesses (in and out of Northglenn) to afford billboard advertising on I-25;

An old sign is improved with the latest technology; and

A two-pole sign is replaced with a monopole sign.

Cons

The dimensions of the sign (height and square feet) are increased over the existing conditions with an increase in height of 200% and an increase in area of 70%;

The City Sign Code must be amended to increase the dimensions and operation of the sign, which requires increased education of staff and a legislative process; and

The billboard owner/operator is not required to advertise Northglenn businesses on the sign, and other businesses outside the City (competitors) would be allowed to advertise on the sign. It is important to note this is the existing condition with the current sign.

CONCLUSIONS:

If the City Council believes this proposal warrants further consideration, the following is a summary of potential next steps in the process:

1. If the City Council agrees to proceed further, a formal amendment to the Municipal Code will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration at a public hearing.
2. Concurrent with the Municipal Code amendment, staff will coordinate a formal agreement with the City Attorney and Mile High Outdoor for consideration by the City Council at a future meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposal from Mile High Outdoor, dated April 23, 2010 (with exhibits)

City of Northglenn Off-Premise Advertising Signs (proposed new Municipal Code text)

MILE HIGH

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

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Proposal for the City of Northglenn

Prepared by: Steve Richards, Mile High Outdoor

Regarding: Signage Partnership with Northglenn and Mile High Outdoor

Date: 4/23/10

Summary:

City of Northglenn has a sign code that allows for off-premise billboard advertising in specifically zoned areas adjacent to I-25. Mile High owns a sign on the west side of I-25 in the U-Store It property at 114th that conforms to the City's regulations as well CDOT's regulations. To our knowledge, this is the only billboard within the City limits. The changes we would like to make to the sign would be beyond the current limits set forth by Northglenn's existing sign ordinance. Mile High is interested in remodeling its above described sign to using the latest digital LED technology to change its advertising faces electronically. Mile High would like to offer the City of Northglenn a unique partnership opportunity by incorporating permanent City signage as part of the sign structure, free advertising/branding for the City on the digital sign faces, and new revenue opportunity source for the City to enjoy.

Specific Remodel Proposal:

1. Rebuild existing sign as a "mono-pole" (currently supported with 2 "I-beam" poles) with pole covers and a Northglenn City Seal or permanent signage on both sides visible to I-25 traffic.
2. Height of sign to 50-60 feet (currently 20 feet) – height allows for maximum visibility of sign face and City signage and minimizes exposure to apartments to the south of the sign.
3. Custom sign design and framework (see examples of signs in Tolleson and Glendale, AZ) to distinguish this sign from a typical "billboard" sign.
4. LED Digital sign faces on both sides of the sign – message/content will be static and will only change every 8-10 seconds. Brightness of the sign would be controlled by industry standards which are well below what most LED signs are currently set at on highways in Colorado.
5. Sign faces will be approximately 14' high x 48' long (current sign is 11' high x 36' long); adding 3' to the height of the current sign face and 12' to the current length of the sign face.

Northglenn Branding Proposal: There are approximately 147,000 cars passing the intersection of I-25 and 120th daily. This partnership would allow Northglenn a unique opportunity to brand its City to every car that drives down I-25.

1. Permanent signage: Mile High would like to offer both sides of the sign to Northglenn for the purpose of permanent, illuminated signage. See examples of Glendale and Tolleson, AZ signage.
2. Digital sign faces: Mile High would like to offer one 7 second "spot" per minute on each of the 2 LED sign faces for its own marketing and promotion purposes. Content can be as simple as "Welcome to Northglenn" to promotions of upcoming events, to public service announcements, construction projects, etc. See pictures of examples provided – multiple messages can be used daily and messages can be changed with no cost and minimal notice.

One of a Kind Public Service Opportunity: Northglenn would be the only city in the State with a sign on the interstate that can be used for traffic accident updates, Amber alerts, weather warnings, crime assistance, etc.

Revenue Opportunity and Value of Free Signage:

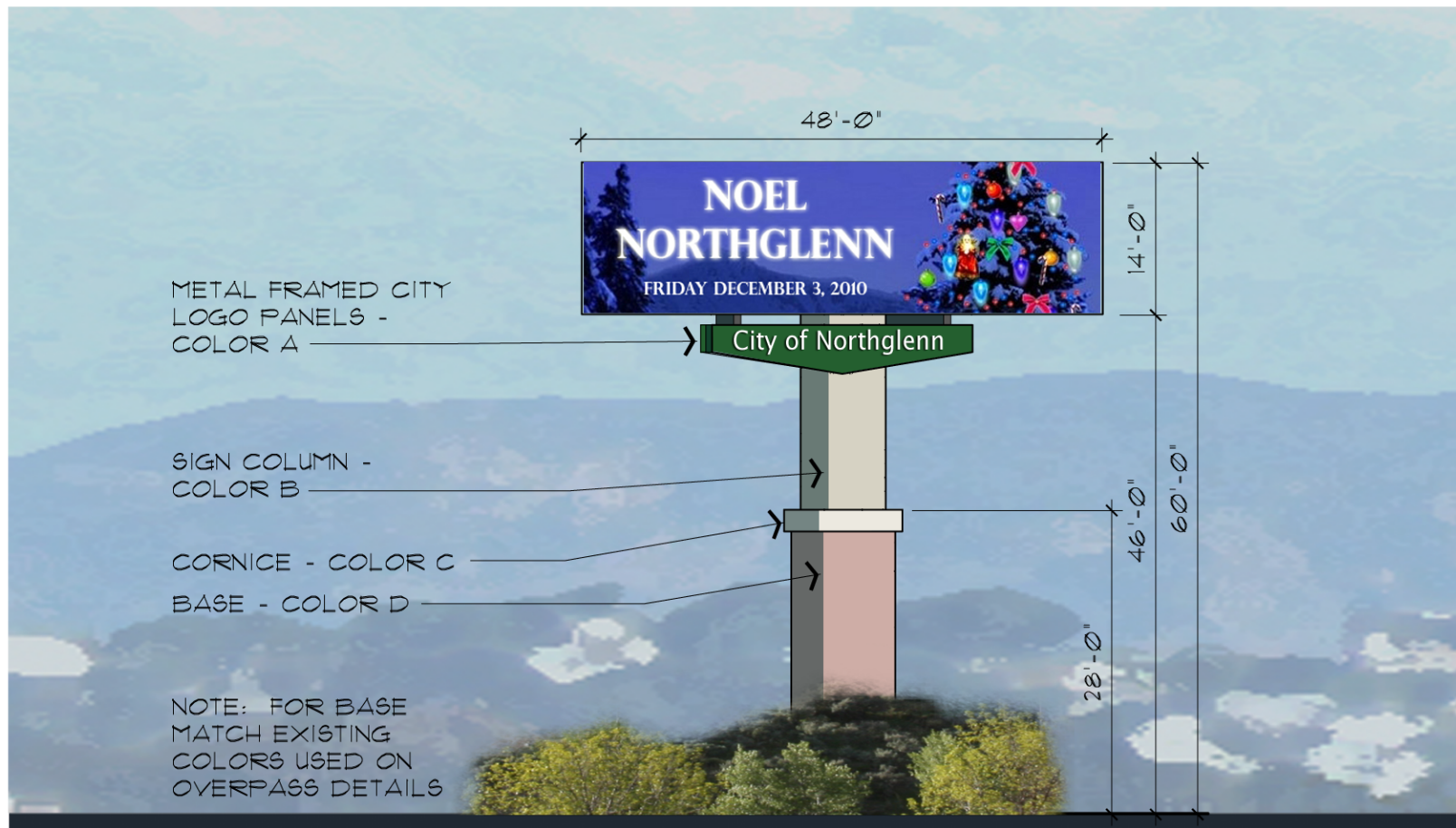
Revenue opportunity: Mile High would like to propose paying Northglenn an significant annual permit fee for the right to operate its sign. The exact amount will be determined at a later date.

The permanent signage and public service opportunity is more difficult to place a value on, but offers Northglenn an opportunity unlike any other city in Colorado. We value to the signage opportunity given to Northglenn at over \$100,000 annually.

Mile High is prepared to move forward on this project immediately and looks forward to further discussions with the City of Northglenn and a future partnership!



TODD LAWRENCE
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METAL FRAMED CITY
LOGO PANELS -
COLOR A

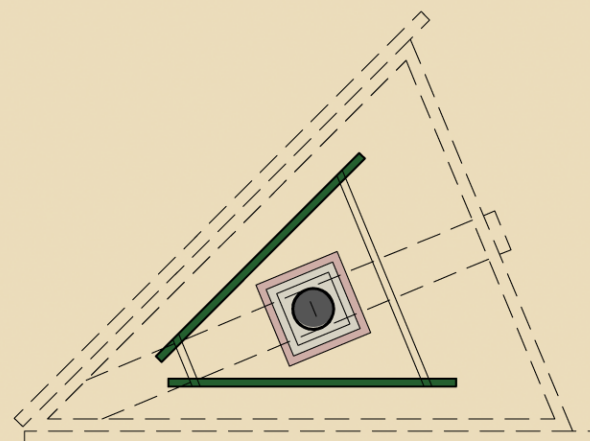
SIGN COLUMN -
COLOR B

CORNICE - COLOR C

BASE - COLOR D

NOTE: FOR BASE
MATCH EXISTING
COLORS USED ON
OVERPASS DETAILS

ELEVATION



PLAN

MILE HIGH
OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

NORTHGLENN
BILLBOARD
CONCEPT 2

SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"

07/11/10



City of Northglenn



I-25 & 114th North Face

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

11-35-5 (h) Off-Premises Advertising Signs are signs advertising or directing attention to a business, commodity, service or activity conducted, sold or offered elsewhere than on the same lot upon which such sign is located and are subject to the following restrictions:

- (1) They shall be permitted in I-1 and I-2 Industrial Zones located adjacent to Interstate Highway 25;

[Source: Ord. 871, 1987]

- (2) They shall not exceed ~~60 29~~ feet in height or ~~400 672~~ square feet in area;
- (3) They shall be placed at least 2,000 feet apart;

[Source: Ord. 871, 1987]

- (4) They shall be set back a minimum of 25 feet from the front property line;
- (5) On corner lots, they shall not be placed within a 300-foot vision triangle;
- (6) They may be indirectly or internally illuminated;
- (7) They may be placed at ground level except when the sign would be closer than 1,000 feet to an intersection, in which case the bottom of the sign shall be elevated at least eight feet above the ground;
- (8) No more than two poles or other structural members shall be used to support the sign; and
- (9) They shall have no more than two faces, and no more than one sign or message shall be placed on each side of the structure.

(10) A digital billboard may be incorporated into an Off-Premise Advertising Sign subject to the following restriction:

- a. Message Hold Time – Each message displayed shall remain static for a minimum of ten (10) seconds. All such signs shall have a default mode to prevent the display from malfunctioning in a flashing or intermittent fashion.
- b. Transition Method – Each electronic sign shall be limited to static messages only, and shall not have movement, or the appearance or optical illusion of movement, of any part of the sign structure, design, or pictorial segment of the sign. This shall include the movement or appearance of movement of any illumination or the flashing, scintillating

or varying of light intensity. The transition duration shall be instantaneous.

c. Brightness / Luminance –

i. Each electronic sign shall be equipped with dimming technology that automatically varies the brightness of the electronic sign according to ambient light conditions.

ii. The intensity of the light source shall not produce glare, the effect of which constitutes a traffic hazard or is otherwise detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare. Lighting from the message module shall not exceed 500 NIT (candelas per square meter) between dusk and dawn as measured by the equivalent 'Percentage of Maximum Brightness-Nighttime' setting on the applicant's sign controlling software. Applications for sign permits containing an electronic display shall include the manufacturer's specifications and NIT rating. City officials shall have the right to view the programmed specifications of the sign to determine compliance.
