


PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM
#13-03

TO: Mayor Downing and City Council Members

FROM: David Willet, Acting City Manager, Public Works Director
Brook Svoboda, Director of Planning and Development 

DATE: March 4, 2013

SUBJECT: Chapter 11, Article 35 – Signs and Outdoor Commercial Advertising Devices Ordinance Re-write

BACKGROUND:

Chapter 11, Article 35 of the Northglenn Municipal Code regulates signs and outdoor commercial advertising devices. The code has existed, in its current framework, since 1973 with the City making minor amendments over the years to address specific issues related to signage. The resulting code is currently disjointed, conflicted, and difficult to use for applicants and staff administration.

In July of 2012, staff proposed a complete revision of Chapter 11-35 to balance the need to protect the public safety and welfare, the need for a well-maintained and attractive community, and the need for adequate identification, communication and advertising. As further consideration, staff aims to rewrite the code in the context of providing a content neutral code that does not regulate messages placed on signs, but rather, the time, place, and manner in which signs are constructed. Article 35 does not regulate Traffic Control Devices in any areas of the Right-of-Way. Traffic Control Devices and their placement are regulated by the guidelines provided by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

From the outset, staff used the following goals to accomplish this balance:

- A user friendly document;
- A code that provides all businesses or residents a consistent set of regulations;
- Maximize the visual impact;
- Reduce visual clutter and over signage;
- Contemporary and responsive to the changing sign industry;
- Allowing flexibility in the code to promote creativity
- Content neutral

SUMMARY:

At the direction of Council, staff commenced the sign ordinance re-write process in October of 2012 with a series of meetings held at regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings. The following topics were discussed at the meetings listed:

October 16, 2012 –	Kickoff meeting to discuss signage throughout the City
November 20, 2012 –	Proposed outline and organization of a new sign ordinance
December, 18, 2012 –	Non-Residential and Residential Permanent Signage
January 15, 2013 -	Non-Residential Temporary Signage
January 29, 2013 -	Residential Temporary Signage

In each meeting staff led presentations to promote a dialogue with the Planning Commission regarding administrative and technical aspects of an updated sign code. Staff solicited feedback and guidance from the Commission for the process moving forward. The presentation will provide a general summary regarding their feedback:

Proposed changes to the ordinance are largely structural and do not focus solely on technical merits and performance standards of different types of signs. The revisions include the following:

- An updated section hierarchy,
- The inclusion of tables and graphics,
- The organization of signs into two types of land uses: residential and non-residential
- Reorganization and enhancement of administrative provisions
- Removal of content oriented regulations
- Small adjustments to technical performance standards regulating signs

The following is the anticipated schedule for future milestones:

02/19/13 – Review remaining issues with Planning Commission
03/04/13 – Study Session with City Council
03/18/13 – Review draft sign code with City Council
03/19/13 – Review draft sign code with Planning Commission
04/02/13 - Public Hearing with Planning Commission
04/08/13 - First Reading – Ordinance to replace Article 35 of Chapter 11
04/22/13 - Second Reading and Public Hearing – Ordinance to replace Article 35 of Chapter 11

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS:

The amendments to the Sign Code are developed by current staff and some additional review will be required by the City Attorney.

STAFF REFERENCE:


If Council members have any comments or questions they may contact Brook Svoboda, bsvoboda@northglenn.org or Travis Reynolds, treynolds@northglenn.org.

NORTHGLENN SIGN ORDINANCE UPDATE

Meeting Date:
March 4, 2013

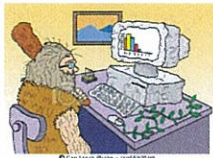
Introduction

- Purpose of Today's Meeting
 - ▣ Update City Council on progress of Sign Code Re-write
 - ▣ Review the updated process
 - ▣ Provide Proposed Outline
 - ▣ Discuss Proposed Changes
 - ▣ Foster discussion and get feedback



Why update the Sign Ordinance?

- Outdated
- Unclear definitions
- Difficult to objectively and consistently enforce
- Difficult for the public to use and interpret
- Content based regulations



Purpose

- Sign Code Update focus: signage regulations for the Non-Residential and Residential areas
 - ▣ A user friendly document;
 - ▣ A code that provides all businesses or residents a consistent set of regulations;
 - ▣ Maximize the visual impact;
 - ▣ Reduce visual clutter and over signage;
 - ▣ Contemporary and responsive to the changing sign industry;
 - ▣ Allowing flexibility in the code to promote creativity
 - ▣ Content neutral

Signs: Legal Considerations

- Signs are a form of speech
- Regulations cannot control content
- The City can only regulate the time, place, and manner of sign displays.
 - ▣ *Time*: Duration for which a sign is displayed.
 - ▣ *Place*: Where a sign is located.
 - ▣ *Manner*: What size and type of sign is displayed.

Summary to Date:

- ✓ October 16, 2012 – Kickoff meeting to discuss signage throughout the City
- ✓ November 20, 2012 – Proposed outline and organization of a new sign ordinance
- ✓ December, 18, 2012 – Non-Residential and Residential Permanent Signage
- ✓ January 15, 2013 - Non-Residential Temporary Signage
- ✓ January 29, 2013 - Residential Temporary Signage
- ✓ February 19, 2013 – Recap of Issues

Anticipated Schedule:

- 03/18/13 – Review draft sign code with City Council
- 03/19/13 – Review draft sign code with PC
- 04/02/13 – Public Hearing with PC
- 04/08/13 - First Reading, Ordinance to amend Chapter 11-35
- 04/22/13 - Second Reading of Ordinance to amend 11-35 and Public Hearing

Proposed Sign Ordinance Outline

- I. Purpose and Intent
- II. General Provisions
 - A. Prohibited Signs
 - B. Non-Conforming / Abandoned Signs
 - C. Variance
 - D. Violation
- III. Administration/Application
- IV. Residential & Non-residential Signs
 - A. General Performance Standards
 - B. Sign Types (and Specific Performance Standards)
- V. Comprehensive Sign Plans

Proposed Changes:

- An updated section hierarchy,
- The inclusion of tables and graphics,
- The organization of signs into two types of land uses: residential and non-residential
- Reorganization and enhancement of administrative provisions
- Removal of content oriented regulations
- Small adjustments to technical performance standards regulating signs

Planning Commission Recommendations: Permanent Non-Residential

- Freestanding Signs will be regulated by square footage of building vs. site acreage.
- Additional wall sign area will be allowed for those businesses setback further from the road.
- Freestanding Signs shall have a setback less than 25 feet.
- Staff will explore options to improve joint identification signs by regulating minimum square feet of sign and maximum percentage the anchor is allowed.

Planning Commission Recommendations: Temporary Non-Residential

- Increase the total number of days temporary signage is allowed.
 - ▣ Minimum 15 consecutive days, maximum 60 consecutive days, up to 8 times in a calendar year.
- Make Prohibited Sign language more clear to aid with enforcement and user interpretation.
 - ▣ Maintain current prohibitions, but add language for wind powered movement
- Repeal portion of **Section 11-19-3** Commercial Uses by Right that speaks specifically to signage.

Planning Commission Recommendations: Temporary Residential

- How to handle Temporary Residential Signs in context of election season(s)
 - ▣ One (1) Temporary detached sign
 - ▣ Approach relief during election season (Standard & Primary)
 - ▣ Unlimited yard signs (2 sq. ft. limit)