



Sign Code Update

Part One:

Reorganization and Portable Signs

Planning and Zoning Board
Study Session
March 21, 2017



*Sign, sign,
everywhere a sign.
Breaking up the
scenery, breaking
my mind.*

~Five Man Electrical Band

c.1971

Practical Effect of Reed v. Town of Gilbert

□ Reed v. Town of Gilbert (issued June 2015)

- U.S. Supreme Court: Sign regulation **cannot** be based on Sign's Content or Message.

□ Sign Ordinance Modifications are Needed

- Most Cities', including Mesa, classify **portable signs** by message type
- Flagstaff recently removed message content references.
- Tempe adopted changes based on 'content neutral' principles. This concept removes message content classifications and any distinctions between on-site and off-premise signs.
- Draft changes circulated by Phoenix, Gilbert and Chandler remove references to message type.

Sign Ordinance Update: Objectives

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- This Presentation
- **Reorganization of Overall Sign Ordinance**
 - Follow up Phase to Zoning Code Update
 - **Update Portable Sign Requirements**
 - Remove Message-based Temporary Sign Classifications
 - Replace with Portable Sign Form Classifications
 - Utilize Location- and Context-based Requirements
- Next Month's Presentation
- **Update Permanent Sign Requirements, including:**
 - Updating Sign Allowances by Zoning District
 - Design Standards for Permanent Signs
 - Development of Administrative Sign Plan Option

Reorganization of Sign Ordinance

- **Objective: Become More User-Friendly**
 - Break Out Several Additional Topics into Chapters and Sections
 - Provide Frequent Topic Chapter and Section Headings
 - Continue Use of Hypertext Links for Online Version
 - Place Most Frequently Used Topics in Earlier Chapters
 - Increase Use of Tables, Illustrations and Example Photos
 - 'Stand Alone' Sign Ordinance
- **Objective: Content Neutral Sign Ordinance**
 - Eliminate Exceptions
 - Carefully Manage Definitions, Prohibitions and Applicability Reqs.

Portable Signs - Basic Organizing Principles

- ❑ Portable Signs May No Longer be Classified by Message
- ❑ Revisions Based on Sign Forms, Materials & Context of Location
- ❑ Objective: Provide **Rough Equivalency** to Current Options
 - Present Temporary Signs Will Have a Similar Allowance after Revision
 - Paradigm Shift: Rough Equivalency is not necessarily 'Apples to Apples'

Determining Allowances: Sign Forms, Context & Setting Standards

- ❑ Focus on Measurable Aspects of Signs and Context of Placement
- ❑ Organize Using Form-Based Code Principles and Concepts

1. Classify Sign Form

- Based on Materials, Structure Type, and Method of Anchoring to Ground

2. Location and Context of Placement

- Zoning District
- Length of Street Front
- Parcel Size
- Number of Street Fronts

3. Set Standards

- Number
- Sight Distance Triangles
- Sign Height
- Setback Distance from Street
- Sign Area
- Spacing Between Signs

Change to Temporary Sign Classifications

Ignore Message and Classify by Portable Sign Form
example

Current Classifications



**Weekend
Directional Signs**



**Political Signs
(Not During Campaign Season)**



Proposed Classification



Yard Sign

- Post Anchors Sign to Ground
- Uses Less Durable Materials
(Index Paper, Cardboard, Foam Core)

Change to Temporary Sign Classifications

Ignore Message and Classify by Portable Sign Form
example

Current Classifications



Real Estate Sign



**Subdivision
Marketing Sign**



Proposed Classification



Detached Rigid Sign

- Post Anchors Sign to Ground
- Uses Rigid, Durable Materials (Wood, Sheet Metal, Thick Plastic)

Proposed Portable Sign Allowances

- ❑ Create Two Sets of Portable Sign Allowances
 - **Base Allowance**
 - Standard Allowance Assigned to Each Lot – Determined by Location and Context
 - Design Objective: Address Daily Need for Portable Signs
 - **Permit-Related Allowances**
 - Additions to the Base
 - Temporary Authorizations for Activities of Limited Duration
 - Linked to Issuance of a Permit or License
 - Design Objective: Recognize Temporary Need for Additional Portable Signs

Allowed Portable Sign Types



- Attached Rigid
(ex: Plywood attached to Building)



- Detached Rigid
(ex: Plywood attached to Posts)



- Yard
(ex: Foamcore attached to Lath Stake)



- Detached Banners



- Wall Banners



- A-frame or T-frame

Prohibited Portable Sign Types



- Air Activated Graphics

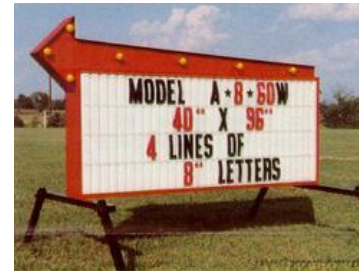
(ex: Animated by blowing air)



- Balloons and Similar Inflatable Devices



- Pennants, Streamers and Similar



- Portable Message Centers
(ex: Mounted on parked trailers)



- Stationary Vehicles
(ex: Signs on vehicles that remain permanently parked in the same place)

How General Base Allowances are Determined

- ❑ **Number, Height and Area of Signs Progressively Increase Based on:**
 - **Zoning Districts:**
 - Residence (generally - fewer, smaller)
 - Commercial and Industrial (generally - more, larger)
 - **Lot Size:**
 - Smaller Lots (generally - fewer, smaller)
 - Larger Lots (generally - more, larger)
 - **Number of Street Fronts – Each Street Front is Separate Allowance**

How General Base Allowances are Determined

- Height: 3-ft when located within 15-ft of Edge of Pavement
 - Safety Issue – Impedes Sight Visibility for Exiting Vehicles
- Fabric Based Signs – Limited Allowances
 - 30-days/year in Allowed Areas
 - **Detached Banners:** Limited to Commercial & Industrial Districts
 - **Wall Banners** - Limited to:
 - Commercial and Industrial Districts
 - Downtown or 'Main Street' Urban Transects
 - Special Event Licenses in all Areas

Summary of Assumptions for Determining Portable Sign Allowances

- ❑ **Each Lot has a Specified Allowance for Portable Signs:**
 - Maximum Number of Signs
 - Maximum Aggregate Sign Area
 - Max. Individual Sign Area, which is Less than Aggregate
 - Maximum Detached Sign Height
 - Minimum Separation Distance Between Signs
 - List of Allowed Sign Forms
- ❑ **Choice: Whatever Combination Works** within Requirements

Single Residence: RS, RSL, DR-1, T3N, and AG Districts

Based on Relationship of Sign to Site, Including:

- Sign Type
- Zoning
- Street Frontage
- Acreage
- Spacing
- Type of Permit

Standard Requirement	Maximum Aggregate Sign Area	Maximum Individual Sign Area	Maximum Number of Signs, Per Street Front	Maximum Height	Allowed Sign Types	Minimum Separation
1-Acre or Less	12-sqft	8-sqft	2	6-ft	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid Yard	30-ft
Between 1-Acre and 5-Acres	32-sqft	32-sqft	2 for first acre, and 1 per each additional acre Max: 4	6-ft		30-ft
5-Acres or More	32-sqft of sign area per 500-ft of street frontage, per street front	32-sqft	4	6-ft		30-ft

Example: Medium Single Residence Lot (RS-15)

❑ Portable Sign Requirements for 15,000-sqft Single Residence Lot, One Street Front:

Maximum Aggregate Area	12-sqft
Max. Individual Sign Area	8-sqft
Max. Number of Signs	2
Max. Sign Height	6-ft Placed behind 15-ft setback 3-ft when within 15-ft setback
Allowed Sign Forms	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid Yard Sign
Min. Separation	30-ft

❑ Within these Parameters, Combinations Include:

- One 6-sqft Attached Rigid Signs & One 3-sqft Yard Sign
- Two 6-sqft Detached Rigid Signs Spaced 30-ft Apart
- Two 3-sqft Yard Signs Spaced 30-ft Apart

Mid to Intensive Commercial: LC, GC, DB-2, & PEP Districts; And LI Districts with Council Use Permit for Large Format Retail

- ❑ Based on Relationship of Sign to Site, Including:
- Sign Type
 - Zoning
 - Street Frontage
 - Acreage
 - Spacing
 - Type of Permit

Standard Requirement	Maximum Aggregate Sign Area	Maximum Individual Sign Area	Maximum Number of Signs	Maximum Height	Allowed Sign Types	Minimum Separation
1-Acre or Less	32-sqft	32-sqft	3	8-ft	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid A-frame/T-frame	50-ft
Between 1-Acre and 5-Acres	64-sqft	32-sqft	4	8-ft		50-ft
5-Acres or More	32-sqft of sign area per 150-ft of street frontage, per street front	32-sqft	4, plus 1 per 5-acres	8-ft		50-ft

Example: Commercial Lot (zoned LC)

❑ Requirements for 2-ac. Commercial Lot

Max Aggregate Sign Area	64-sqFt
Max. Individual Sign	32-sqFt
Max. Number of Signs	4 (3 plus 1 for second acre)
Max. Sign Height	8-ft placed behind 15-ft setback 3-ft placed within 15-ft setback
Allowed Sign Forms	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid A-frame/T-frame
Minimum Separation Between Signs	50-ft

❑ Combinations include:

- One 32-sqft attached rigid signs & Two 16-sqft detached rigid signs
- Two 32-sqft detached rigid signs
- Three 20-sqft detached rigid signs
- One 32-sqft Attached Rigid, and One 16-sqft sign & Two 8-sqft signs
- Four 16-sqft Detached Rigid Signs

Effects of Changes - Examples

SINGLE RESIDENCE LOT – 7,000 SqFt



Present Allowances:

Contractor Sign: 8-sqft

Political Sign: 8-sqft

Sale/Lease: 6-sqft

Aggregate: 20-sqft

Proposed Allowances:

Aggregate: 12-sqft

Max. Number: 2

Max. Ind. Area: 8-sqft

Sign Forms: 3 options

- Attached Rigid
- Detached Rigid
- Yard

VACANT INDUSTRIAL LOT – 20 Acres



Present Allowances:

Development Sign: 80-sqft

Sale/Lease: 24-sqft

Political Sign: 32-sqft

Contractor: 8-sqft

Aggregate: 144-sqft

Proposed Allowances:

Aggregate: 128-sqft (600-ft of Street front)

Maximum Number: 4

Sign Forms: 3 Options

Allowance for Vacant Lot > 1-ac: Max. 80-sqft

Detached Rigid: Max. 32-sqft

Attached Rigid: Max. 32-sqft

A-frame/T-frame: Max. 6-sqft

Potential Effects of Changes

- ❑ **Possible Increase in Number of Portable Signs Being Used**
 - ❑ Due to Allowance of Any Message on the Sign
- ❑ **Maximums Changing Compared to Proposed Form-based Classifications**
 - ❑ Some Form-based Signs are Smaller and Others Larger When Compared to Message-based Classification System Due to Standardization of Sizes

Proposed Allowances for Fabric Signs

- ❑ **Without Special Event License:** Limit to Commercial & Industrial Districts Only
 - Maximum Cap on Number of 'Occurrences' Based on 30 Total Days per Year
 - Examples:
 - 2 times for 15-days each
 - 3 times for 10-days each
 - 15-times for 2-days each
 - Maximum Height and Area Standards
 - 8-ft high and 16-sqft
 - Detached Fabric Required to be setback a minimum of 15-ft from face of curb
 - Maximum of two per street front
- ❑ **With Special Event License:** All Districts

'Rough' Equivalency to Existing Classification

Current Temporary Sign Classification (Message-Based)	Possible Portable Sign Replacement Options (Form-Based)					
	<i>Rigid Attached</i>	<i>Rigid Detached</i>	<i>Detached Banner</i>	<i>Wall Banner</i>	<i>A-frame/ T-frame</i>	<i>Yard Sign</i>
<i>Real Estate Sale/Lease/Rent</i>	X	X	30-day Limit Commercial & Industrial	Commercial & Industrial Urban Transects, 30-day Limit	--	X
<i>Real Estate Open House Directional</i>	X	--	30-day Limit Commercial & Industrial	--	--	X
<i>Development</i>	X	X Vacant Lot Allowance	30-day Limit Commercial & Industrial	Commercial & Industrial Urban Transects, 30-day Limit	--	X
<i>Contractor</i>	X	X	30-day Limit Commercial & Industrial	Commercial & Industrial Urban Transects, 30-day Limit	--	X
<i>Subdivision On-site Marketing</i>	X	X Commercial Use in Residential District	30-day Limit Commercial & Industrial	Commercial & Industrial Urban Transects, 30-day Limit	--	X
<i>Political</i>	X	X	30-day Limit Commercial & Industrial	Commercial & Industrial Urban Transects, 30-day Limit	--	X
<i>Grand Opening</i>	X	X	30-day Limit Commercial & Industrial	Commercial & Industrial Urban Transects, 30-day Limit	--	X
<i>Special Events</i>	X	X	X	Commercial & Industrial Urban Transects, 30-day Limit	X	X

Note: Equivalency Comparison is intended only to show that current temporary sign classifications can be accommodated by more generalized form-based 'portable sign type' regulation, without regulating sign message.

Summary & Questions

Development Services Dept. - Planning Division

Sign.Info@mesaaz.gov

Appendix

Multiple Residence and Lower Intensity Commercial: RM, DR-2, DR-3, T4N, OC, NC and DB-1 Districts

Based on Relationship of Sign to Site, Including:

- Sign Type
- Zoning
- Street Frontage
- Acreage
- Spacing
- Type of Permit

Standard Requirement	Maximum Aggregate Sign Area	Maximum Individual Sign Area	Maximum Number of Signs Per Street Front	Maximum Height	Allowed Sign Types	Minimum Separation
1-Acre or Less	16-sqft	16-sqft	2	6-ft	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid Yard	50-ft
Between 1-Acre and 5-Acres	48-sqft	32-sqft	2 for first acre, and 1 per each additional acre Max - 4	8-ft		50-ft
5-Acres or More	32-sqft of sign area per 500-ft of street frontage, per street front	32-sqft	4, and 1 per each additional 5-acres	8-ft		50-ft

Industrial and Employment: LI, GI, HI and EO Districts

Based on Relationship of Sign to Site, Including:

- Sign Type
- Zoning
- Street Frontage
- Acreage
- Spacing
- Type of Permit

Standard Requirement	Maximum Aggregate Sign Area	Maximum Individual Sign Area	Maximum Number of Signs, per Street Front	Maximum Height	Allowed Sign Types	Minimum Separation
1-Acre or Less	32-sqft	32-sqft	3	8-ft	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid Yard	50-ft
Between 1-Acre and 5-Acres	64-sqft	32-sqft	4	8-ft		50-ft
5-Acres or More	32-sqft of sign area per 150-ft of street frontage, per street front	32-sqft	4, and 1 per each additional 5 acres	8-ft		50-ft

Appendix

Urban Neighborhood: T4NF, T4MS, T5N T5MSF Transects

☐ Based on Relationship of Sign to Site, Including:

- Sign Type
- Acreage
- Zoning
- Spacing
- Street Frontage
- Type of Permit

Standard Requirement	Maximum Aggregate Sign Area	Maximum Individual Sign Area	Maximum Number of Signs, per Street Front	Maximum Height	Allowed Sign Types	Minimum Separation
1-Acre or Less	16-sqft	16-sqft	2	6-ft	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid A-frame/T-frame Wall Banner Yard	50-ft
Between 1-Acre and 5-Acres	32-sqft	24-sqft	4	8-ft		50-ft
5-Acres or More	32-sqft of sign area per 200-ft of street frontage, per street front	32-sqft	4	8-ft		50-ft

Urban Main Street and Downtown: T5MS, T6MS, MX and DC Districts

Based on Relationship of Sign to Site, Including:

- Sign Type
- Zoning
- Street Frontage
- Acreage
- Spacing
- Type of Permit

Standard Requirement	Maximum Aggregate Sign Area	Maximum Individual Sign Area	Maximum Number of Signs, per Street Front	Maximum Height	Allowed Sign Types	Minimum Separation
1-Acre or Less	32-sqft	32-sqft	2	6-ft	Attached Rigid Detached Rigid A-frame/T-frame Wall Banner	50-ft
Between 1-Acre and 5-Acres	32-sqft	32-sqft	4	8-ft		50-ft
5-Acres or More	32-sqft of sign area per 100-ft of street frontage, per street front	32-sqft	4	8-ft		50-ft

Appendix

Current Portable Sign Allowances

Based on
Relationship of Message
to Activity

Requires Reading Message to Classify

No Longer Allowed
Based on
Reed v Town of Gilbert

☐ **Real Estate Sale, Lease Rent Signs**

- 1 sign per street front;
- Varies in size by acreage: 6-sqft to 24-sqft

☐ **Subdivision On-site Marketing Signs**

- 1 sign per perimeter street front, Max of 3
- 48-sqft and 10-ft high
- Administrative Use Permit required

☐ **Subdivision Off-site Marketing Signs**

- 2 signs maximum
- 48-sqft and 10-ft high
- Administrative Use Permit required

☐ **Weekend Directional Signs**

- 10 signs maximum
- 3-sqft and 4-ft high
- Limited to hours between 2pm Fri and 8am Mon
- Administrative Use Permit Required



Appendix

Current Portable Sign Allowances

Based on
Relationship of Message
to Activity

Requires Reading Message to Classify

No Longer Allowed
Based on
Reed v Town of Gilbert

- **Contractor Signs**
 - 1 sign during construction or repair
 - 8-sqft and 6-ft high
- **Development Signs**
 - 1 sign per street front
 - 1 ac or less: 32sqft and 8-ft high
 - More than 1 ac: 80-sqft and 12-ft high
- **Banners and Other Fabric Signs**
 - 30-days during Grand Openings and Change of Ownership/Branding
 - Use during Special Events with Special Event License
- **Political Signs**
 - Residential Districts: 1 sign per street front;
 - Maximum: 16-sqft and 6-ft high
 - Non-residential 1 sign per street front per measure
 - Maximum: 32-sqft and 8-ft high

