

# Sign Code Update



City Council  
Study Session

May 18, 2017



# Overview

- ☐ Objectives of Sign Code Update
- ☐ Portable Signs (temporary signs)
- ☐ Permanent Signs
- ☐ Public Input
- ☐ Staff Recommendations



# Objectives of Sign Code Update

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- ❑ Comply with Reed v. Town of Gilbert
  - Replace content-based regulations with form-based regulations
  - Standardize size for portable sign
- ❑ Modernize the Sign Code
  - Update 1986 sign code
  - Make more user-friendly
  - Update for changes in building sizes and technology





# Objective of Sign Code Update: Reed v. Town of Gilbert

- ❑ Decision issued June 2015
  - Sign regulations **cannot** be based on Sign's Content or Message
- ❑ Content Neutral Sign Ordinance
  - Eliminate Message-based References and Sign Classifications
  - Eliminate Exceptions
  - Carefully Manage Definitions, Prohibitions and Applicability Requirements
- ❑ Surrounding Communities
  - Flagstaff and Tempe have adopted changes
  - Phoenix, Gilbert and Chandler have drafted changes



# Revisions Related to Reed Decision



- ❑ Sign Classifications **May Not be Based on Message Type**
- ❑ Sign Allowances **May Not Show Preference To** One Type of Speech
- ❑ In Particular, Revisions Are Required to **Portable** Sign Regulations
- ❑ Revised Portable Sign Regulations are Based on **Sign Form**, Materials, and Location Context
- ❑ Revised Portable Sign Regulations **Will Not Limit Message**
- ❑ **Standardize** Sign Areas

# Portable Signs: Philosophy Used to Determine Allowance

- ❑ 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



# Portable Signs: Allowed Types

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- **Attached Rigid**

(ex: Plywood Attached to Building)



- **Detached Rigid**

(ex: Plywood Attached to Posts)



- **Yard**

(ex: Foam core Attached to Lath Stake)



- **Detached Banners**



- **Wall Banners**



- **A-frame or T-frame**

# Portable Signs: Single Residence Allowance

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	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	Yard	30-ft



# Portable Signs: Mid to Intensive Commercial Allowance

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	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	A-frame/T-frame	50-ft

# Portable Signs: Fabric Signs

- ❑ **Without Special Event License:**
  - Commercial & Industrial Districts Only
  - Allowed 30 Total Days per Year
  - Maximum 8-ft high and 16-sqft
  - Detached Fabric Signs: Setback 15-ft from face of curb, 50-ft separation
- ❑ **With Special Event License:** Allowed in All Districts During Special Event
  - Outside of Downtown: Four 4-day Events are allowed by-right each Year
  - Downtown: Unlimited No. of 4-day Events
  - Extra Days/Events w/Special Use Permit



# Portable Signs: Potential Effects of Changes



## ❑ Possible Increase in Number of Portable Signs Used

- Due to Allowance of Any Message on the Sign
- What May have been Limited to Just a Real Estate Sale Sign, or a Contractor Sign, or Some Other Temporary Sign May Now be Used for ANY Message



## ❑ 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

# Objective of Sign Code Update: Modernizing the Sign Ordinance



- ❑ Last Complete Update of Sign Code completed in 1986
- ❑ Proposed Revisions to Permanent Sign Allowances
  - Update Downtown and Urban Districts' Signage Allowances
  - Update Commercial District Sign Maximums
    - Recognize Increased Scale of Commercial Projects
    - Recognize Increased Number of Multiple Tenant Projects in Office Districts
- ❑ Provide Administrative 'Standard' Sign Plan Option
- ❑ Update Minimum Design Standards for Sign Structures



# Permanent Signs

- ❑ **Increase Sign Allowance for Multiple Tenant Offices**
- ❑ **Pad Buildings and In-line Tenant Space Options**
- ❑ **Roughly the Same as Present Requirements for Number, Height and Area**
- ❑ **Administrative 'Standard' Sign Plan Option**
  - Commercial Centers with greater than 400-ft of Street Front
  - Allow One 14-ft high sign at 120-sqft with all other detached signs limited to 8-ft and 50-sqft
- ❑ **Comprehensive Sign Plan through a Special Use Permit Remains an Option**





# Public Input

Meetings:

April and May 2017

- Southeast Valley Regional Association of Realtors (SEVAR)
- National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)
- International Sign Association (ISA)
- Valley Partnership
- Sloan Lyons Public Affairs  
(represented Retailers during Phoenix sign code updates)
- Arizona Food Marketing Alliance and Walgreens
- Home Builders Association of Central Arizona (HBACA)
- Arizona Multi-housing Association
- Arizona Retailers Association
- Resident Meetings: East and West Side
- Mesa Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Mesa Property Owners
- International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)

# Comments & Staff Recommendations

- ❑ Increase Maximum Individual Sign Area for Attached Signs
  - Staff Proposal: Maintain at 160-sqft
- ❑ Shorten Transition Rate for Electronic Message Panels
  - Staff Proposal: 1 Message Every 8-secs
- ❑ Increase Maximum Height and Area of Detached Signs
  - Staff Proposal: 12-ft high and 80-sqft, with  
Standard Sign Plan Option at **14-ft high and 120-sqft**



# Comments & Staff Recommendations

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## ❑ Fabric Signs

- Neighborhood wants Fabric Signs prohibited
- Industry wants allowance for increased use of Fabric Signs
  - Staff Proposal: restricted allowance of 30 days per year; special events



## ❑ Detached Rigid Signs

- Larger Signs for Subdivision Marketing
  - Staff Proposal: Standardizing Portable Signs Individual Maximum at 32-sqft
  - Avoid Showing 'Preference' of One Message over Another



# Tentative Project Schedule:

- ☐ June 2017
  - Release **Public Review Draft** for Comments
- ☐ June and July 2017
  - Study Sessions with **Planning and Zoning Board**
- ☐ July and August 2017
  - **Planning and Zoning Board** Hearing for Consideration
- ☐ September 2017
  - **Council Introduction** of Sign Code Ordinance
- ☐ Fall 2017
  - **Council Action** on Final Sign Code



# Questions

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Development Services Dept. - Planning Division

[SignInfo@mesaaz.gov](mailto:SignInfo@mesaaz.gov)

# Additional Information

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APPENDIX

# Permanent Signs:

## Increase Sign Allowance for Multiple Tenant Offices

- ❑ Proposed Separation of Ratios and Maximums
- ❑ Results in Slight Increase in Overall Sign Allowance for Offices
  - Individual Tenants: 24-sqft minimum (may be smaller)
  - Multiple Tenants: 20-sqft minimum
  - Attached and Detached Signs: 32-sqft Maximum
    - Detached Sign: 8-ft Maximum Height





# Permanent Signs: Attached Signs on Pad Buildings

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- ❑ Presently, Pad Buildings and In-line Tenant Spaces are Treated the Same
- ❑ Proposed:
  - Define Pad Building: less than 5,000-sqft gross floor area, single tenant occupant
  - **Applicant Choice:**

<u>Standard Sign Allowance</u>	<u>Pad Building Sign Allowance:</u>
■ Max Number: <b>2 or 3</b> Total for Building	■ Max Number: <b>4</b>
■ Max Individual Sign Area: <b>160-sqft</b>	■ Max Individual Sign Area: <b>80-sqft</b>

**Sign Ratio, Maximum Aggregate Sign Area and Maximum Width Remain the Same**



# Permanent Signs: Detached Signs

- ❑ **Roughly the Same as Present Requirements for Number, Height and Area Ratios:**
  - 1-sqft sign area per lineal foot of street front
  - Single Sign: 1-ft sign height per 10 lineal feet of street front,
  - Multiple signs: 1-ft sign height per 20 lineal feet of street front
- ❑ **Maximums:**
  - Height: 12-ft
  - Area: 80-sqft
- ❑ **Administrative 'Standard' Sign Plan Option**
  - Commercial Centers with greater than 400-ft of Street Front
  - Allow One 14-ft high sign at 120-sqft with all other detached signs limited to 8-ft and 50-sqft
- ❑ **Comprehensive Sign Plan through a Special Use Permit Remains an Option**



# Outreach Comments

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## From Neighborhoods:

- ❑ Overall Preference: Fewer Signs and Smaller Signs
- ❑ Concern: Portable Signs Up for Long Periods of Time (> 6 months)
  - Specific Example Provided: Mesa-Phx Marathon Signs
- ❑ Concern: Continued Allowance of Fabric Signs
- ❑ Concern: Lax Enforcement of Fabric and 'Bandit' Signs



# Outreach Comments

## From Real Estate Agents & Apartment Owners:

- ☐ Preference: Allow Fabric Signs in Multiple Residence Districts
- ☐ Preference: Allow attached wall banners and 'feather' banners
- ☐ Preference: Allow Portable Signs Greater than 3-ft high w/in 15-ft of Edge of Pavement
- ☐ Preference: Increase Number of Days of Use for Fabric Signs
  - Current: 30-days per year
  - Requested: 45 or more





# Outreach Comments

## From Homebuilders:

- ❑ Allow Fabric Signs in Model Home Complexes
  - Allow both attached wall banners and ‘feather’ banners
- ❑ Allow Larger ‘Rigid’ Signs at Model Home Complexes
  - Current: 32-sqft;
  - Requested: Up to 96-sqft
- ❑ Allow Weekend Directional Signs in Some Manner
  - Proposed: Permission of Property Owner Required
  - Counted as a part of that Property’s Sign Allowance



# Outreach Comments

## From Sign Companies, Commercial Center Owners & Retailers:

- ❑ Consider Larger 'By-Right' Individual Attached Maximum Sign Areas
  - Current Max is 160-sqft per sign (ex.: signage used on a Home Depot)
- ❑ Use Same Ratio – Confusing to Use 2 Ratios for Small and Large Buildings
  - Standard: 2-sqft per 1-lineal front foot for buildings up to 200-ft lineal fronts ,
  - Large Format Commercial: 0.8-sqft per 1 lineal front foot over 200-ft wide
- ❑ Like/Support Administrative 'Standard' Sign Plan Option
- ❑ Consider Sign Height and Sign Area Ratios Based on Speed Limits
- ❑ Additional Details Needed on Portable Sign Allowances
- ❑ Consider Increase in Number of Days for Fabric Sign Allowances

