



DATE: October 21, 2024
TO: City Council
THROUGH: Nana Appiah, Development Services Director
Mary Kopaskie-Brown, Planning Director
FROM: Rachel Nettles, Assistant Planning Director
SUBJECT: Mesa Zoning Ordinance text amendment (**Billboard Update**) - Proposed amendments to Chapter 25 of the Mesa City Code.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council adopt the proposed Mesa Zoning Ordinance Billboard Update text amendments.

On October 9, 2024, the Planning and Zoning Board voted to recommend (4-0) that City Council adopt the proposed Mesa Zoning Ordinance Billboard Update text amendments.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

On March 4, 2024, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 5847, allowing Billboards within certain areas of the City with the approval of a Billboard Overlay District. Since the enactment of the Ordinance, it has become apparent that certain development standards should be modified to address specific site conditions that may exist on some sites and to maximize the efficacy of the Billboard Ordinance.

The proposed text amendments affect Chapter 25 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) and are attached in Exhibit 1 (Billboard Update Ordinance). Specifically, the proposed changes: (1) Modify the spacing requirement between a Billboard and another Billboard or between a Billboard and a Freeway Landmark Monument; (2) Modify the spacing requirements between Billboards and Residential Zoning Districts or residential uses; and (3) Clarify the height requirements for Billboards.

SUMMARY OF THE AMENDMENTS AND EXPLANATION:

- 1) Modify the spacing requirement between a Billboard and another Billboard or between a Billboard and a Freeway Landmark Monument.***

Chapter 25 of the MZO allows for a maximum of two Billboards within a Billboard Overlay District. However, Section 11-25-4(C) of the MZO, requires that a Billboard be separated from another Billboard or Freeway Landmark Monument by 1,200 feet.

This distance has posed a challenge for eligible sites located adjacent to freeway on and off ramps to maintain adequate visibility.

Staff recommends modifying the spacing requirements to 1,000 feet. The number of billboards per site has not changed; no more than two (2) are allowed per site.

2) *Modify the spacing requirements between Billboards and Residential Zoning Districts or residential uses.*

Section 11-25-4(C) of the MZO regulates the spacing between Billboards and Residential Zoning Districts or residential uses and requires a 500-foot separation unless the residential use is part of a mixed-use development. The intent of this requirement is to minimize the visual impacts that Billboards may have on residences.

This requirement may pose a challenge for the placement of certain Billboards because of specific site conditions.

Staff recommends that an exception to the spacing requirement be allowed if the applicant can demonstrate, through a line-of-site study or balloon test, that the Billboard will not be visible to or from any residential use within 500 feet that is not part of a mixed-use development or a Residential Zoning District. In no case shall the Billboard be located closer than 400 feet from a Residential Zoning District or residential use.

3) *Modify the height requirements for Billboards.*

Section 11-25-4(D)(3) of the MZO, regulates the height of Billboards to 48 feet from the grade of the adjacent freeway, not to exceed 70 feet. The current standards anticipated instances where the site is situated below the grade of the freeway, but did not anticipate site conditions such as berms or freeway sound walls that may reduce visibility.

Staff recommends that the height requirement be clarified for sites that are situated at or above the grade of the freeway, or below the grade of the freeway. For sites whose elevations are at or above the grade of the freeway, the maximum height of a Billboard would be limited to 60 feet from the average elevation of the natural grade within a 50-foot radius from all sides of the Billboard. For sites whose elevation is below the grade of the freeway, the maximum height of a Billboard would be limited to 60 feet as measured from the freeway elevation.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Staff recommends the ordinance approving the proposed text amendments become effective 30 days from the date of City Council approval.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Billboard Update Ordinance