

# Welcome

## SIGN CODE UPDATE PUBLIC MEETING

Museum of Discovery  
Learning Lab Room 110

Thursday, February 1, 2018  
5:30 – 7:30 PM

Drake Centre  
West Banquet Hall

Wednesday, February 7, 2018  
5:30 – 7:30 PM

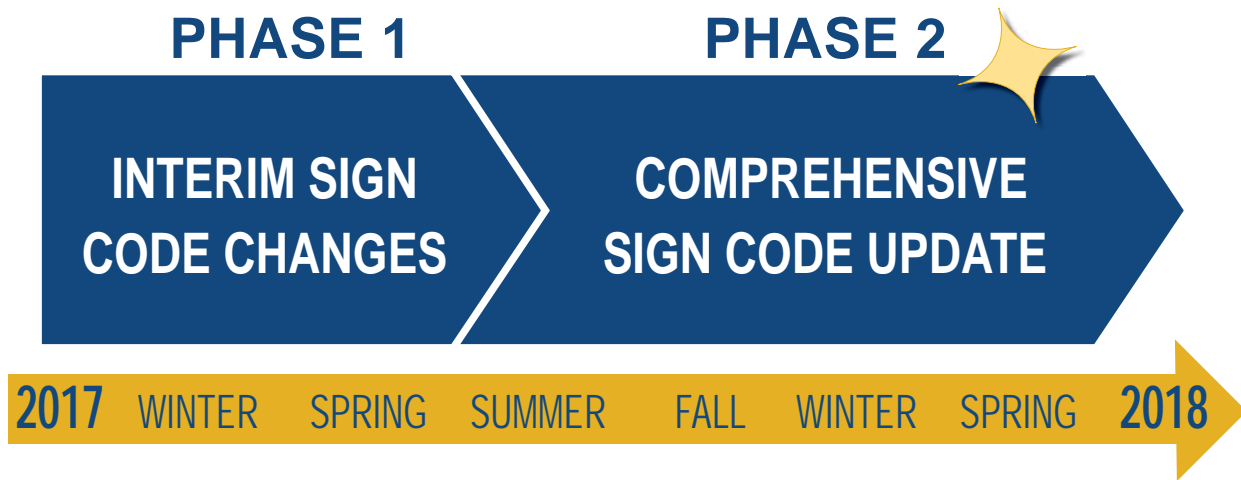


# PROCESS AND HOW TO PARTICIPATE

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The process of updating the sign code is divided over two phases. The first phase focused on an initial critical update to reflect consistent standards regardless of a sign's content.

The second phase will reconfirm the community's goals for the entire sign code, engaging the public in conversations about size, color, lighting, location, technology, and materials.



- Content neutral regulations
- Enhance legibility of Sign Code
- Implement the Downtown Plan with specific sign standards
- Explore changes to accommodate new technology
- Confirm current sign standards are achieving City's goals

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## Participation Tonight

- **6:00pm - Join us for a interactive group exercise, drilling into your preferences for sign changes**
- **And/Or review the information on the boards and offer feedback on how to improve the sign regulations**

# WHY REGULATE SIGNS?

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Fort Collins has been regulating signs since the 1970's. At the time, it was in response to rapid growth and a trend toward sign proliferation and commercial marketing that was changing the character and identity of the City. The existing sign regulations generally:

- balance business interests and community aesthetics
- preserve and enhance property values
- provide a level playing field for commercial and non-commercial speech
- protect public safety

Additionally, the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes that “signs take up space and may obstruct views, distract motorists, displace alternative uses for land, and pose other problems that legitimately call for regulation.”



College Ave. in the 1960s

## WHY UPDATE THE SIGN CODE NOW?

### *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*

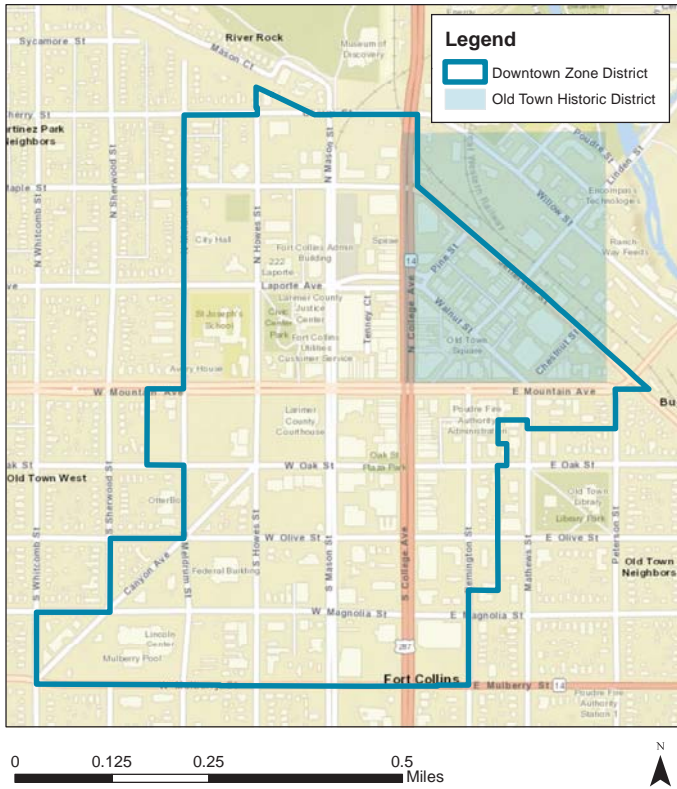
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Similar to many jurisdictions across the nation, the City of Fort Collins is updating their sign code in response to the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*. This ruling clarified that sign codes must be content neutral. This means that sign regulations cannot vary standards such as size, location, and duration based on the message of the sign (e.g. “political sign” or “for sale sign”). Some existing City codes are based on the type or message of the regulated sign.

This sign code update is also an opportunity to reconfirm that the sign standards balance business interests and the City's aesthetic values and goals. This focuses on enhancements to the overall legibility and use, materials, implementation of the recently adopted Downtown Plan, and exploration of new technology.

# SIGNS DOWNTOWN

Downtown Fort Collins Zoning District



## Context

The Downtown Plan (2017) calls for preservation of historic character, attractive streets, defined downtown gateways and enhanced pedestrian experience, and recognizes that signs contribute to all these goals. The Old Town Design Guidelines outline additional requirements for signs, but only apply to buildings within the Old Town Historic District.

## Issues

The downtown area is recognized as vibrant pedestrian district and a unique area in Fort Collins but the Sign Code does not reflect that unique character. Most of the sign regulations are related to the vantage point from an automobile, and are applied uniformly across all non-residential areas.

## What Are We Reconsidering?

### Wall Signs

- Type
- Lighting
- Size

### Projecting Signs

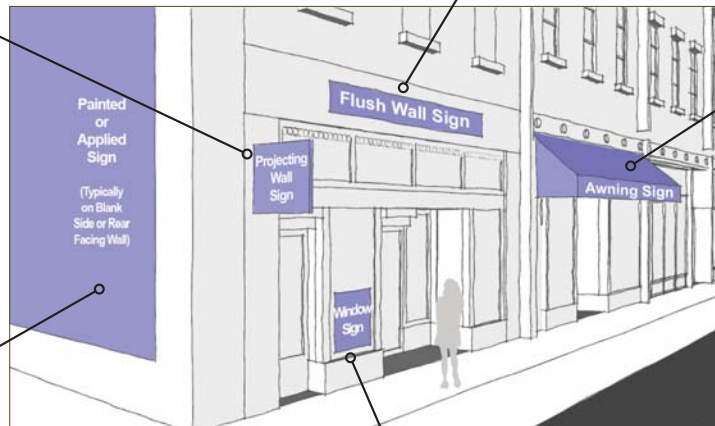
- Height

### Awning Signs

- Coverage

### Painted/Applied Signs

- Location
- Size/Wall Coverage



### Window Signs

- Window Coverage
- Transparency

# DOWNTOWN - WALL SIGNS



## What are they?

Signs that are painted on, applied to, or affixed to a building wall. Includes individual letter signs, bulletin boards, cabinet signs, and dimensional wall signs.

## What does the code allow today?

- Max. Height: 7'
- Max. Projection from Wall: 12"
- Length: <75% of width of the tenant storefront
- Allowance: 1 wall sign for on each exterior wall

## Concerns

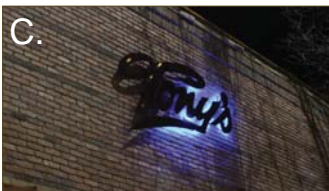
- Proportionality and relationship to building
- Design features not consistent with Downtown character



## Questions

1. How should wall signs Downtown be illuminated? (select all that apply)

- A. Backlit
- B. Direct or External Down Lighting
- C. Halo Lighting
- D. Internally-illuminated cabinet signs



2. Should the maximum height of wall signs be shorter if mounted on the first story of a building?

- A. No, sign height maximums should be the same regardless of building height
- B. Yes, wall signs should be shorter if mounted within 15' of sidewalk level



Example of different sizes. Existing 1stBank sign on top.

# DOWNTOWN - PROJECTING SIGNS

## What are they?

A sign that is mounted on or affixed to a building wall, such that the sign face is generally perpendicular to the building wall.



7' tall projecting sign



10' tall projecting sign on 4 story building



10' tall projecting sign on 2 story building

## What does the code allow today?

- Max. Projection into Right-of-Way: 48"
- Max. Square Footage: 15 sq. ft. per face
- Max. Height: 7'
- Clearance: 8' or more above public right-of-way

## Concerns

- Proportionality and relationship to building
- Flexibility on taller buildings for vertical signs

## Questions

1. The existing regulation is 7' maximum height for projecting signs, and cannot exceed the roofline. Should the maximum height be calibrated to the height of the building?

- A. No, 7' is tall enough.
- B. Yes, buildings with 3 stories or more should allow signs 10' tall.
- C. Yes, buildings with more than 2 stories should be allowed an additional 1' of height for every additional story.

2. Additional Comments/Concerns?

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# DOWNTOWN - WINDOW SIGNS



## What are they?

A type of temporary or permanent sign that is: (i) painted on, applied to, or attached to a window; or (ii) installed or positioned within a building within 3' of the window.

## What does the code allow today?

- Illuminated window signs require a sign permit
- Non-illuminated window signs under 6 sq. ft. are exempt from permit requirements if they cover <25% of window
- Max. Height: 7'
- Window Coverage: Not to exceed 80 sq. ft. and max. 50%

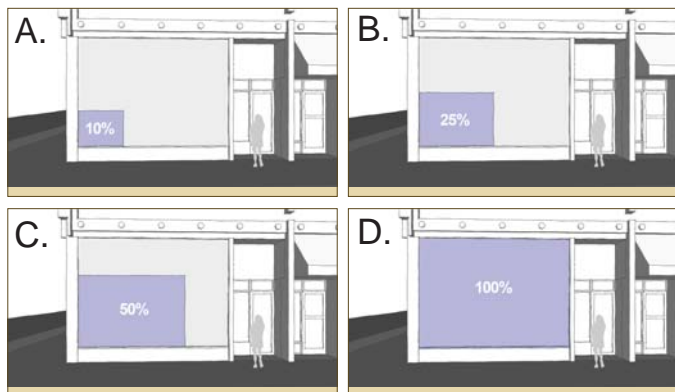
## Concerns

- Covers too much of the window
- Transparent window signs have different character

## Questions

1. How much should window signs cover window frontage in Downtown?

- A. 10%
- B. 25%
- C. 50%
- D. 75% or more



2. Should Transparent Window Signs be treated differently?

- A. Yes
- B. No

*Example of transparent window sign*



2.b: If Yes, how should the city calculate sign allowance for Transparent Window Signs?

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# DOWNTOWN - AWNING SIGNS



## What are they?

Signs that are integrated into or applied to an awning that is attached to a building. An awning is covered with fabric or flexible material.

## What does the code allow today?

- Sign cannot project above the top of awning
- Max. Projection from Building: 7'
- Clearance: 8' or more above a public right-of way
- No awning signs above the first story
- Limited to <35 sq. ft. per tenant space and 25% of the total awning area
- Awning area that exhibits company branding colors or graphics are counted towards the sign allocation



## Concerns

- Coverage

## Questions

1. Should we change our coverage allowance on awnings to allow something like this?

- A. Yes (explain below)
- B. No (explain below)



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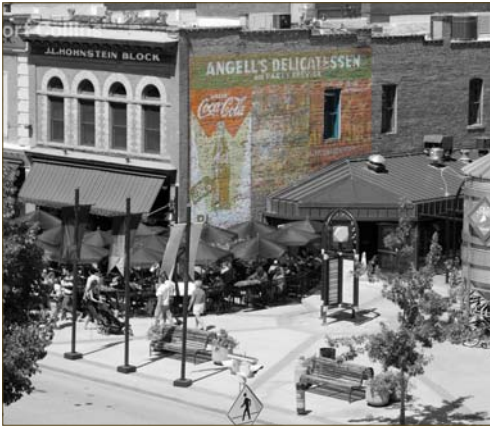
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# HISTORIC SIGNS

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## What are they?

Signs that are older than 50 years old that add to Downtown's character, including recreated signs on historic buildings and ghost signs.

## What does the code allow today?

Signs on buildings within the Old Town Historic District are subject to guidelines within the *Old Town Design Standards*.

## Concerns

- Some contemporary signs do not compliment the historic architecture



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## Questions

The city is interested in creating flexibility within the Sign Code or a separate program to recreate signs on historic buildings from their period of significance.

1. What are your thoughts? Do you have any concerns or suggestions?

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# SECONDARY ROOF SIGNS



## What are they?

Signs located on lower roofs and horizontal architectural features, including canopy signs.

## What does the code allow today?

All roof signs are currently prohibited by the Sign Code. Additionally, signs are prohibited from extending above the height of a canopy.

## Concerns

- Many buildings have more than one roof and these roofs tend to vary in height. All roof signs are currently prohibited, with no exception for lower roofs.
- Design trends are adding more canopy features



## Questions

1. Should these signs be allowed in any districts around Fort Collins?

- A. Historic Districts
- B. Residential Districts
- C. Downtown
- D. Midtown
- E. Harmony Corridor
- F. None of the above

3. Should the maximum size of these signs change by district?

- A. Yes, smaller in Residential Districts
- B. Yes, smaller in Non-Residential Districts
- C. No, same requirements across all Districts

4. Additional Comment/Concerns?

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2. What is your preference for the height of the sign's copy area?

- A. Less than 12"
- B. Between 12"-18"
- C. Between 18"-36"
- D. Larger than 36"



# ELECTRONIC MESSAGING CENTERS (EMCs)



## What are they?

Electronic Messaging Centers refer to the portion of a ground or wall sign that displays and changes words or images electronically by remote or automatic means. EMCs are highly versatile and there is a big market for them.

## What does the code allow today?

- Coverage: 50% of sign can be an EMC
- Color: Limited to 2 colors
- Resolution: Pixel size no more than 16mm
- Timing: Can change message every 60 second



## Concerns

- New technology is influencing EMC capabilities and design such as color and resolution.

## Questions

1. Currently, 50% of the sign can be an EMC. Should this be increased/decreased?

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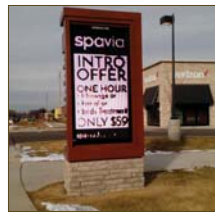
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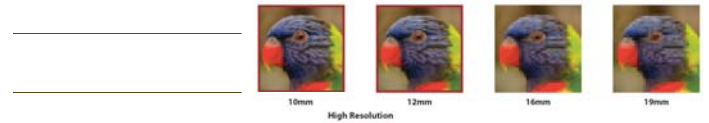
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Examples: ~50% (top) and ~75% (bottom)

3. Currently EMCs are limited to 16mm pixel spacing. Should EMCs be allowed higher resolution (i.e. pixel size)?




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Example: 10mm pixel spacing

2. Should the number or range of allowable colors change?

- A. No, stay with existing 2-color limit
- B. Yes, allow more than 2 colors, but not full range
- C. Yes, allow full range of colors



# BILLBOARD SIGNS

## What are they?

These signs are large bulletin or poster signs that are constructed “off-premise,” meaning that the sign message doesn’t relate to the business on the property. Since 1994 the city has not allowed the construction of any new off-premise signs (i.e. billboards). The intent was to reduce the remaining billboards over time. Digital Billboards are computer-controlled electronic displays with technological capabilities.



|            | Path 1: Attrition<br><i>(Owners remove existing billboards voluntarily)</i>  | Path 2: Digital Billboards<br><i>(Owners remove existing billboards in order to construct a digital billboard)</i>          |
|------------|--|---|
| Location   | I-25, Mulberry, Downtown, Riverside, Mason, N. College Ave., S. College Ave. | Commercial/industrial areas on Riverside, N. College Ave. (north of Downtown), S. College Ave. (south of Prospect) and I-25 |
| Design     | Same as existing   | Need to define digital billboard design standards   |
| Brightness | Same as existing   | Need to define allowable brightness and glare standards   |
| Pros       | No change to existing sign code  | Accelerates reduction of existing billboards. Supports market demand.   |
| Cons       | Will take a long time  | Digital billboards may not be contribute to desired character.  |
| Outcomes   | A dozen a decade   | Up to 5 locations   |

## Questions

1. Do you prefer Path 1 or 2 from the above table?

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2. What is the appropriate size of digital billboards?

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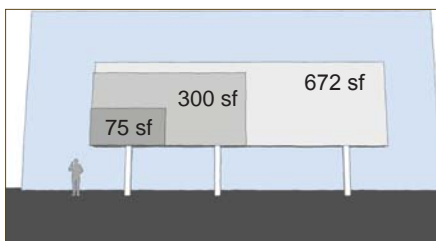


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3. How often should the message be able to change on a digital billboard?

- A. Once per 60 seconds (same as EMCs)
- B. Based on sight distance and speed of approach so that approaching drivers only see one message change

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# INTERACTIVE WINDOW SIGNS



## What are they?

Interactive window signs refer to illuminated screens displayed inside store windows that can be programmed and allow customers to navigate to see new content.

## What does the code allow today?

This type of sign is not currently allowed in the code.

## Concerns

- Location (where are these appropriate)
- Size
- Brightness



## Questions

1. Where are interactive window signs appropriate?

- A. Midtown
- B. Downtown
- C. All Non-Residential Areas
- D. Not appropriate in Fort Collins

2. How large should this type of sign be?

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3. How should we control brightness on these types of signs?

- A. Turn off screen between 12-6 am
- B. Automatically dim screens at night
- C. Update lighting regulation

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Smaller option

Larger option

# PROJECTED LIGHT SIGNS

## What are they?

Static image or text projected onto a surface by a laser or video projector. These signs are entering the commercial market, though are not yet widely popular.



## What does the code allow today?

This type of sign is not currently regulated in the sign code, though there are relevant lighting standards that apply.

## Concerns

|          | Vertical Surface<br><i>(front, side, or rear wall of buildings)</i>        | Horizontal Surface<br><i>(sidewalks, parking lots, pavement)</i>                |
|----------|--|---|
| Audience | Motorists and pedestrians  | Pedestrians   |
| Position | Allow on first story or upper stories?                                     | Allow within certain distance of business entrance?                             |
| Size     | Would need to define sign permit requirements                              | Same size and permitting as an A-frame sign if projected on public right-of-way |
| Safety   | Limit the path of light from crossing the public right-of-way at eye level |   |

## Questions

1. Should a vertical projected light sign count toward the total sign allowance?

- A. Yes, count toward sign allowance.
- B. No, do not count toward sign allowance.
- C. Depends whether other existing signs on the property are lighted.

2. Where would projected light signs be appropriate?

- D. Downtown
- E. Midtown
- F. All Non-Residential Areas
- G. Not appropriate in Fort Collins

3. Allow on first story and/or upper stories?

- A. Only first story
- B. Only upper stories
- C. Either first or upper stories



Example: projected light sign on upper stories

4. Should the projected light be allowed to show a single color or multiple colors?

- A. Single color
- B. Multiple colors

