

FORT COLLINS SIGN CODE



Public Open House #1

Why does the City regulate signs?

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

- protect community aesthetics,
- preserve and enhance property values, and
- 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.”

Why is the City updating the sign code?

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 achieve 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.

What is the process and schedule?

The process of updating the sign code is divided over two phases. The first phase focuses 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.

