

## **CITY COUNCIL HEARING ON SIGN CODE:**

On August 11, 2014, the City Council conducted a public hearing on Bill No. 2678, an ordinance to amend Section 20.56 "Signs" of the municipal code. The Council continued this item to provide City staff the opportunity for additional analysis and to develop alternatives to certain provisions of the proposed sign code. Staff was also asked to come back and obtain Council direction about alternatives, and revise the proposed code accordingly, before bringing Bill No. 2678 back for Council action.

Staff's understanding of the discussion on August 11<sup>th</sup> is that the Council focused on the proposed separation distance of 3,000 linear feet between digital special freestanding signs, including concerns that this standard would:

- Unduly restrict the conversion of existing special freestanding signs or nonconforming outdoor advertising structures (see definitions below) to digital signs.
- Overly restrict the number of new digital special freestanding signs.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

**Nonconforming outdoor advertising structure (NOAS)** – means an off-premise sign that was installed prior to adoption of the Sign Code in 2002, which made these sign nonconforming.

**Special freestanding sign (SFS)** - means a sign that can be located in the Industrial zoning district; such signs may not exceed 672 square feet and do not count against the maximum allowable sign area for the property on which it is located. There are specific height, size and design standards for SFS.

## **OTHER POINTS ABOUT THE SIGN CODE:**

- Only NOAS in Industrial zoned property have the potential to become SFS. The existing NOAS located on the west side of town and north of I-80 are not zoned Industrial and therefore cannot convert to SFS.
- Without a separation distance requirement, any Industrial zoned property could potentially to erect a SFS, either digital or static.
- The current code and proposed code define the separation distance between SFS as a lineal distance measured on the same side of the street.
- Commercial and industrial zoned properties are permitted to erect monument and/or freestanding signs, which could include a digital sign, provided all criteria is satisfied.
- As a reminder, Sparks' Sign Code is 'content-neutral' which only addresses time, place and manner in which a sign is displayed/operated.
- A 'content neutral' sign code consistently applies nondiscriminatory sign regulations which do not reference the content of the message or sign; therefore, the code does not distinguish between on-premises and off-premises signs. For this reason, a property owner may advertise businesses or products that are not sold on site.