



# MEMORANDUM

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*"... meeting community needs... enhancing quality of life."*

**Plan Commission Meeting Date:** January 20, 2014

**Item:** Zoning Ordinance Updates to Article XIV SIGNS

**Case Manager:** Jeff Towne

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## Scope of Project

As part of the Community and Economic Development Department's continuing update of the City of Appleton Zoning Ordinance, staff is preparing revisions to Article XIV SIGNS. This section sets the standards for the regulation of signs throughout the City.

Signs are regulated in a manner that allows a message to be conveyed, while not negatively impacting the health, safety and welfare of the community. Signs are regulated for such things as bulk (dimensions, height, square footage), placement (setbacks, location) and structural aspects (wind load, electrical components). The specific copy of a permitted sign is not regulated except when community values determine it to be offensive or when it may cause confusion by imitating an official sign (traffic control, warning signs).

The current ordinance is being evaluated to ensure that it is up to date with current industry trends and technology in order to allow citizens, organizations and businesses to utilize existing technology to display their messages competitively and efficiently while balancing the need for orderly development and reasonable design standards to keep the City free of excessive clutter, light pollution/glare and distractions.

## Highlights

Some of the general categories to be reviewed and an overview of the analysis to be performed:

Definitions- The definitions listed in the sign section will be reviewed in order to clarify the meanings of the terms used in the code and to make sure that those terms reflect language currently used in the industry.

Electronic Changeable Copy Signs- In order to bring the ordinance up to date with advances in electronic signage capabilities, changes will be proposed to definitions and standards to allow for the use of additional forms of electronic advertising. Technology such as LED lighting sources and display screens provide opportunities for advertising in different ways than before. This includes messages that can be easily changed and updated electronically without making physical changes to a

sign structure. These types of signs are being used more frequently and updating standards to allow for the use of this technology should be an important part of any revisions. Staff will review possible changes to standards for on and off premise electronic signage.

Sponsorship Signs – Standards for signs advertising businesses/individuals/organizations that have provided support to an educational/athletic/park/institutional use or other similar public or private facility are being considered. The intent is to allow sponsors' signs to be viewed by the users of the facility while minimizing the view of this limited off premise advertising from adjacent right-of-ways or adjacent properties.

### **Conclusion**

Staff will review Article XIV SIGNS to ensure that it is up to date with sign technology that was not in place or widely available at the time the code was adopted in 2004. The code will also be reviewed and revisions proposed in areas that need clarification or other modification.