

STAFF REPORT

Application: Ordinance Amendment to Allow for Larger Signs in Residential Zoning Districts

Agenda Item: 3(d)

Background Information: The City received a request to increase the size allowed for signs in residential areas, specifically in areas where a new development has been approved and there is an opportunity to market to new property owners.

The Planning Commission directed staff to prepare an ordinance amendment to accomplish this task.

Proposed Amendments: There are a couple of ways that the Planning Commission could proceed. The first would be to simply increase the size of what is currently allowed. The second would be more targeted, addressing the specific situation of a new housing development.

Option 1

The first option would be to simply change the square footage allowed for on-site signs. This could be accomplished by an amendment to Section 7.1, Subdivision 4, as follows:

4. Onsite Signs.
 - A. Residential Districts.
 1. Signs shall not be internally or externally lighted but may be reflective.
 2. No sign shall be larger than ~~3~~ 32 square feet, ~~except for a permitted home occupation where 6 square feet is allowed,~~
 3. Only one sign per parcel shall be allowed.

Option 2

The second option would be to try and target the regulation to impact only those neighborhoods that are currently under development. This could be done in Section 7.1, Subpart 2, by adding the following language:

Temporary signs are allowed to be placed on private property within newly platted subdivisions for the 48 months following final plat approval, or until land use permits have been obtained on 50% of the parcels, whichever comes sooner. Signs erected under this section shall require a permit and shall not exceed 48 square feet in any zone.

Planning Commission Direction: The Planning Commission may recommend approval of the language, either with or without changes to the text provided here. Guidance can be given to staff for modifications to be presented at the next meeting. There is no requirement that the Planning Commission act at this time, although we must complete modifications to the ordinance before the moratorium expires.

Staff Recommendation: Over the past couple of years, we have had an eroding of the integrity of the residential zone, with commercial activity creeping in to residential neighborhoods. Except for the downtown, we are not set up as a mixed-use community (we could be, and there would be advantages to that, but it would take a much different regulatory approach). We are reluctant to recommend further commercialization of the residential areas.

Option 2 would be a hybrid that would allow commercial signage, but on a temporary basis, tied to the development of the neighborhood. If the Planning Commission would like to adopt an alternative approach, we would recommend consideration of this option.