



CITY OF EVERETT

Community, Planning and Economic Development

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: David Tyler, Planning staff
DATE: December 7, 2018
SUBJECT: Sign Code Update (EMC 19.36)

Background: The last significant change to the City’s sign regulations occurred with the adoption of Evergreen Way (E-1) zoning in 2012. The last major overhaul was completed in 1990. Since that time, there have been numerous incremental changes to the land use code, resulting in added complexity and proliferation of sign regulations throughout the code. Some sign regulations reside outside of the sign chapter of the Land Use code, which makes finding them difficult. There have also been court cases that have effectively placed limits on local government’s regulatory authority, with emphasis on free speech rights and content neutrality. Everett’s code is in need of amendments to ensure its regulations are consistent with these cases.

Goals/Objectives: The City is initiating an update to the sign regulations in Chapter 19.36 of the Land Use code. The goals and objectives of this effort are:

- Streamline the code to make it more efficient; to reduce duplication; to make it easier for the public and staff to use; and, to eliminate conflicts and inconsistencies.
- Consolidate and simplify the sign standards.
- Revise the sign regulations to ensure they are “content neutral” consistent with a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision, and other recent case law.
- Modify and improve sections of the sign code that have not been working as intended.

Key Elements: The Planning Department has begun drafting revisions to the sign code and has focused on the following elements:

- Complete an inventory of all sign regulations in the Land Use Code.
- Draft new regulations on “Temporary signs.”
- Simplify the sign categories and standardize regulations that are appropriate to apply citywide.
- Develop options for freestanding signs in higher intensity commercial zones.
- Reorganize the sign regulations to improve ease of use and navigation.

Future Actions/Next Steps: We will provide draft regulations for the next briefing on the sign code. In addition, we will be performing outreach to stakeholders and scheduling meetings in the near future.

- 1/15/2019 – Planning Commission briefing. Draft code language to be provided
- 2/19/2019 – Planning Commission briefing
- 3/19/2019 – Planning Commission public hearing



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