

## NEIGHBORHOOD DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SIGN PILOT PROJECT

### Background

Digital communication signs remain one of City Council's stated priorities. Residents consistently report that the City lacks reliable communication tools — there is no city newsletter, no local newspaper, and many residents do not use social media. A digital sign provides a modern, visible, and accessible solution for all households.

This project proposes installing **one small, neighborhood-scale digital communication sign** using up to **\$30,000 of EDC sales tax funds**. The sign will serve as a **pilot project** to evaluate effectiveness before any future expansion is considered.

### Project Overview

The EDC proposes installing **one digital communication sign** at **one of four potential locations**. Each location offers different communication benefits based on traffic speed, visibility, city property ownership and neighborhood context.

Because **message length must match driver speed**, each site supports a different communication style:

- **25–30 mph zones → 2–3 lines of text** (neighborhood corridors)
- **35–40 mph zones → 1–2 short lines** (city entrances)
- **40–45 mph zones → 1 short line** (high-visibility gateway)

This flexibility allows the City Council to choose whether the sign should prioritize **resident communication or maximum visibility**.

### Site Options

#### **\*\*Option 1 — Safety Center Corridor (Lake Forest Drive at FM 2483-City Property)**

Speed: 25–30 mph → 2–3 lines of text\*\* This Neighborhood location captures inbound traffic from FM 2483 into Lake Forest and sits at a civic hub (Safety Center + recycling). Slower speeds allow drivers to safely read **2–3 lines**, making it ideal for detailed resident communication.

#### **Strengths:**

- Best readability
- Strongest alignment with original communication purpose
- Supports detailed announcements and community events

- Serves residents near Ansay Park, the highest-requested improvement area

**\*\*Option 2 — FM 2483 City Entrance (City-Owned Property Near Safety Center)**

Speed: 40–45 mph → 1 short line\*\* This is a primary **gateway entrance** into Morgan's Point Resort from FM 2483. Because it is on City property, it avoids easement issues and ensures long-term placement.

Higher speeds limit readability to **1 short line**, but visibility is excellent for quick alerts and branding.

**Strengths:**

- Highest traffic volume
- Strongest pairing with pavilion visibility
- Ideal for emergency alerts and short reminders
- Reinforces city identity at a major entrance

**\*\*Option 3 — Morgan's Point Road @ Apache (City-Owned Property)**

Speed: 35–40 mph → 1–2 short lines\*\* Morgan's Point Resort is the second major city entrance into the heart of MPR. The road reaches residents and guests traveling between neighborhoods, the commercial district and in and out of the City.

Moderate speeds allow **1–2 short lines**, making it a balanced option.

**Strengths:**

- High visibility for residents and visitors
- Good pairing with pavilion events and community activities
- Supports short announcements and seasonal messages
- Maintains a modest, neighborhood-scale presence

**Purpose of the Pilot Project**

- Provide a reliable, visible communication tool for city announcements, emergency alerts, and community events.
- Ensure accessibility for all residents, including those without internet or social media.
- Strengthen community engagement and support the pavilion project by increasing awareness of small, family-oriented activities.

- Create a sustainable communication system that reimburses the EDC investment and funds ongoing operations.
- Maintain small-town character by using a **modest, neighborhood-scale sign**, not a highway billboard.

### Sign Specifications (All Locations)

- **Size:** 8–10 ft wide, 2–3 ft tall
- **Pixel pitch:** 10–16 mm for clear text at roadway distances
- **Structure:** Pole-mounted with concrete footings
- **Durability:** Weatherproof, wind-rated to 90–120 mph
- **Software:** Cloud-based for remote updates
- **Message capacity:**
  - 25–30 mph → 2–3 lines
  - 35–40 mph → 1–2 lines
  - 40–45 mph → 1 line
- **Rotation:** 3–4 messages per loop, 5–7 seconds each

### Budget Breakdown (EDC-Funded Capital, \$30,000 Maximum)

Item	Estimated Cost
LED sign unit (8–10 ft)	\$15,000–\$20,000
Structure & footings	\$5,000–\$7,000
Electrical hookup	\$3,000–\$5,000
Site prep	\$2,000–\$3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$30,000 maximum</b>

### Annual Operating Costs (City-Funded)

- Software license & troubleshooting: \$180–\$240
- Electricity: \$360–\$600
- Optional service contract: \$500–\$1,500
- **Total annual cost:** \$540–\$1,800

## **Sponsorship Program (Optional Revenue Model)**

Purpose: Keep the sign self-funding while giving local businesses affordable visibility.

- **Monthly sponsorship slots:** \$200–\$300
- **Event posting fees:** \$25–\$50 for nonprofits/community groups
- **Annual sponsorship rights:** \$5,000–\$10,000
- **Revenue flow:**
  - **Phase 1:** Reimburse EDC's \$30,000 investment
  - **Phase 2:** Fund City operations (software, electricity, insurance, maintenance)

Sponsorships remain modest and community-oriented to preserve small-town character.

## **Message Management Plan**

- **Responsible staff:** City Secretary or designated Safety Center staff
- **Submission:** Online form or email
- **Approval priority:**
  1. City announcements/emergency alerts
  2. Community events
  3. Business sponsorships
- **Rotation:** 3–5 messages/day; emergency alerts override rotation

## **Economic Benefit & Sustainability**

### **Economic Benefits:**

- Affordable visibility for local businesses
- Increased attendance at community events, including pavilion activities
- Stronger resident satisfaction and trust
- Improved emergency preparedness

### **Sustainability:**

- Sponsorships and event fees reimburse the EDC
- After repayment, the sign becomes self-funding
- Annual performance review ensures continued value

## Benefits of a Neighborhood-Scale Digital Sign

- Provides a reliable communication channel where none currently exists
- Supports emergency alerts and public safety
- Reduces staff workload through remote updates
- Promotes community events and services
- Fits the small-town character of Morgan's Point Resort
- Supports the pavilion project by increasing visibility for small, family-oriented activities

## Recommendation

The EDC recommends installing **one digital communication sign at one of the four proposed locations**, selected by City Council based on communication goals and traffic speed.

All four locations fit within the **\$30,000 maximum budget** and support the City's priority of improving resident communication, while also reinforcing the pavilion project — the highest-requested neighborhood improvement identified in the EDC Survey.