

# DIGITAL BILLBOARDS

## GET THE FACTS...

### MYTH

Proposal 250 will result in a change to the sign ordinance which will immediately allow digital billboards.

### FACT

Proposal 250 asks the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC) to initiate a proposal to amend and make additions to existing zoning ordinances to allow Digital advertising signs in Marion County with appropriate restrictions based upon the draft of proposed amendments which must be reviewed and considered by the Commission. ***Under Proposal 250, the decision to move forward with any proposed amendment to allow digital rests with the Commission.***

### MYTH

There will be an unchecked proliferation of Digital Billboards in neighborhoods across Marion County.

### FACT

The proposed change ***prohibits the construction of new Digital Billboard locations and only allows the conversion of a small, limited number of existing billboard faces per year*** (25 faces in year 1, 20 in each of years 2 and 3, and 4 in any year thereafter).

### MYTH

There has been a ban on the construction of billboards since the current ordinance went into effect.

### FACT

The current ordinance is very restrictive and protective of neighborhood concerns but does not ban the construction of new traditional billboards. There have been fewer than 24 billboards erected in Marion County since the current ordinance was put in place. ***Proposal 250 bans the construction of new Digital Billboards.***

### MYTH

The takedown ratio is equivalent to a single traditional billboard.

### FACT

For each individual face converted, an equal amount of square feet of existing billboards shall be permanently removed from other locations in the community ***reducing the number of billboard locations in the cityscape with the majority of these removals occurring in urban core neighborhoods.***



## MYTH

Any current billboard could be changed out for a Digital Billboard.

## FACT

Conversions are limited to *existing billboards located at least 500 feet from residential or other protected districts* including historic districts.

## MYTH

A new billboard can be built on a location where a billboard was removed resulting in more billboards.

## FACT

Based on concerns expressed by several neighborhood groups, the Proposal states that *no new billboards may be permitted at a location where a billboard has been removed as part of a digital conversion.*

## MYTH

The proposed change would allow Digital Billboards to be deliberately hidden from the view of the public.

## FACT

Proposal 250 was introduced on the City-Council Agenda on August 18. Similar proposals were highlighted in several articles in the media and discussed with City-County Councillors, senior City staff, and members of neighborhood groups over the past three years. The face-to-face meetings with neighborhood organizations began last May and accelerated in recent months. There will be more meetings than typically occur in this type of review process.

## MYTH

Utilizing Digital Billboards to provide AMBER Alerts, emergency storm bulletins, FBI Most Wanted pictures and information is an “anemic benefit for the community.”

## FACT

Digital Billboards provide critical information when time is of the essence in searching for a lost or missing child and serve as force multipliers for local authorities. Recently, Crime Stoppers of Central Indiana and the US Marshals Service posted pictures of wanted sex offenders in Marion County at one Digital Billboard location. *The posting at this single location resulted in 13 sex offenders captured and taken off the streets in less than one week.*

## MYTH

Digital Billboards can contain full motion like Electronic Variable Message Signs (scrolling signs), are distracting, and lead to traffic accidents near them.

## FACT

*The ordinance does not allow full motion, flashing, or the illusion of movement.* Each static message remains in place for a minimum of 8 seconds and transitions between static messages in less than a second. A 2013 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) study found the presence of Digital Billboards does not appear to be related to a decrease in looking toward the road ahead, with the longest look the test subjects gave to a Digital Billboard at 1.34 seconds and to a standard billboard at 1.28 seconds. Both are well below the accepted standard of 2 seconds for distracted driving. Local data from IMPD records and several national studies find no higher incidence of accidents near Digital Billboards.

Learn more about the Proposal 250 and Digital Billboards in Indianapolis by visiting our new website, [www.indydigitalbillboards.com](http://www.indydigitalbillboards.com).