



Sign Ordinance Update

EL DORADO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
LONG RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

July 22, 2014

Legistar #13-0086

Purpose

- Respond to specific issues discussed at December 17, 2013 Board meeting
- Present proposed revisions to the draft Sign Ordinance
- Recommend the Board adopt the proposed Resolution of Intention (ROI) to Amend the Sign Ordinance; authorizing staff to proceed with environmental review of the revised draft Sign Ordinance



Background

- **August 7, 2012** - Board directed staff to contract for preparation of comprehensive sign ordinance amendment and related Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- **December 2012** - Contract executed with Pacific Municipal Consultants, Inc. (PMC)
- **June 25, 2013** - Staff presented the Sign Ordinance Public Review Draft; Board authorized release for 60-day public review
- **July 8, 2013** - Public Review Draft released
- **December 17, 2013** - Staff presented a summary of public comments and requested direction on policy issues identified in the comments



Background

- **December 2013 to Present:**
 - Revisions to draft Sign Ordinance in response to public and agency comments, Board direction and other issues arising during the review process
 - Ongoing consultation with Consultant (PMC), County Counsel and outside counsel (sign law specialist)



Revisions to Draft Sign Ordinance

1. Uniform Sign Program - may allow deviations up to 20 percent of development standards.
2. Highway-Oriented signs - applies only to signs on U.S. Highway 50
3. Murals - will not be regulated by the proposed draft Sign Ordinance
4. Mobile signs on vehicles - only vehicles parked on public property and public right-of-way for the primary purpose of advertising shall be prohibited.
5. Revised language/formatting to address differences in signage needs between urban and rural areas



Revisions to Draft Sign Ordinance...cont.

6. Separate section added to address Community Sign Programs - includes industry association signs found primarily in rural areas.
7. Separate section added to address signs on County property including signs installed on County property as a potential option for removing existing legal billboards.
8. A table listing sign permit requirements for various sign types added to the permitting section.



Revisions to Draft Sign Ordinance...cont.

9. Sign development standards tables re-formatted for clarity and ease of use. Standards for permanent on-site signs in urban and rural areas split into separate tables.
10. Provision added to “Exempt Signs with Limitations” (subsection 17.16.030.B.11) to allow off-site commercial signs in designated rural areas for establishments that do not have direct frontage to County roads. This provision includes a maximum sign area of 16 square feet and maximum height of 12 feet.



Options for Removal of Existing Billboards

1. Negotiated buy-out in lieu of condemnation
2. Condemnation under the eminent domain laws with the payment of just compensation
3. Relocation Agreement between the County and the billboard owner(s) - one or more billboards to be eliminated and one or more billboards to be removed and installed at other locations more acceptable to the County and the public
4. Amortization of billboards that qualify for residential or agricultural land exceptions



Non-Conforming Signs Discussion

1. Off-site signs in rural areas for establishments without direct property frontage to County roads:
 - The proposed revised draft ordinance addresses this issue by adding the provision noted in Revision No. 10
2. Off-site signs for general advertising for hire (e.g., billboards):
 - This category has been addressed by adding the following provision: “Signs that are protected from removal by applicable provisions of state law may be removed only as allowed by state law.” to Section 17.16.100.C
3. Any other non-conforming signs not included in category 1 or 2 above would be subject to the regulations in the “Nonconforming Signs” Section 17.16.100.C



General Plan Proposed Revisions

- The Resolution of Intention includes revisions to one General Plan Objective and one Policy for consistency with the Board's goal:
 - 1) To protect the County's visual character and scenic landscapes/viewsheds in designated scenic corridors,
 - 2) For conformity with state and federal law



General Plan Proposed Revisions

- **Revise General Plan Objective 2.7.1 pertaining to highway signs:**

Signs Regulation - Regulation of the location, number and size of highway signs and potential relocation or elimination of billboards along ~~identified~~ designated scenic corridors and ~~historic routes~~ in accordance with state and federal law.

- **Revise General Plan Policy 2.7.1.2 pertaining to billboards:**

Existing billboards within designated scenic corridors shall be considered for removed or relocated out of the corridor in accordance with state and federal law allowing an adequate time period for billboard owners to amortize the value of their signs pursuant to an amortization schedule to be included in the Sign Ordinance.



Remaining Policy Issue for Board Direction

What should be the timing of message changes (“dwell time”) for electronic (digital) signs and signs in motion?

- Public comments noted that a 12-second dwell time was excessive.
- State law (Outdoor Advertising Act) prohibits message changes, including changes in motion or intensity, more frequent than every 4 seconds.
- Staff research found typical dwell times to range from 6 to 9 seconds, depending on sign visibility and traffic conditions.



Staff Recommendations

1. Reduce dwell time of electronic (digital) signs and signs in motion from 12 seconds to 8 seconds;
2. Consider revisions to General Plan Objective 2.7.1 and Policy 2.7.1.2 as noted in the amended draft ROI;
3. Adopt the ROI to Amend the Sign Ordinance; authorizing staff to proceed with the preparation of all necessary environmental documents pursuant to CEQA.

