



Sign Ordinance Update

EL DORADO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
LONG RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

March 26, 2015 - Planning Commission Hearing

Legistar #13-0086

Presentation Overview

- Board Direction and Project Initiation
- Staff Recommendation for Board Approval
- Project Goal, Objectives and Components
- Public Outreach and Comment Opportunities
- Project Development Timeline
- Sign Law 101 Presentation by Randal R. Morrison
- Environmental Review and Project Alternatives
- Final Steps in Adoption Process



Board Direction & Project Initiation

- **2008** - Board directed staff to initiate comprehensive update to the County Zoning Ordinance, but defer updating the chapter regulating signs
- **2012** - County approved three billboard applications after a lawsuit was filed. Billboards installed along Hwy 50 - one in Cameron Park & two in Shingle Springs
- **2012** - Board approved temporary moratorium on new billboard applications and directed staff to initiate comprehensive update to the Sign Ordinance, separate but concurrent with the Zoning Ordinance Update



Staff Recommendation

1. Adopt Resolution Certifying the EIR to amend County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 130.16 (*see Exhibits A, G & H*); Make Findings of Fact and Issue Statement of Overriding Considerations (*see Exhibit A-1*)
2. Adopt Resolution to Amend County General Plan Land Use Element Objective 2.7.1 and Policy 2.7.1.2 in accordance with state and federal law (*see Exhibit B*)
3. Approve final draft Sign Ordinance Update with the recommended mitigation measure (*see Exhibits D, E & F*)
4. Adopt Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (*see Exhibit C*)



Project Goal & Objectives

- To ensure signs are consistent with the visual and aesthetic goals and policies set by the El Dorado County General Plan
- To protect the County's visual character and scenic landscapes/viewsheds in designated scenic corridors
- Conformity with state and federal law
- Objectives per Resolution of Intention adopted by the Board 7/22/14 and included in the proposed Sign Ordinance



How Project Addresses Objectives

<p><i>A. Promote economically stable and visually attractive communities</i></p>	<p>Allowances for sign exemptions w/limitations(.030.B); Community sign programs (.060); Home occupation sign standards (.070); Clarification on prohibited signs (.090)</p>
<p><i>B. Promote signs that are attractive, pleasing and harmonized with physical character of structure and surrounding environment</i></p>	<p>General sign development and design standards (.070.A); Specific design standards for U.S. Hwy 50-Oriented signs (.070.J.5); Home occupation signs (.030.B.11)</p>
<p><i>C. Recognize distinct signage needs in urban/ rural areas through distinct signage regulations</i></p>	<p>Distinct urban and rural sign standards established and referenced throughout the code; Table 17.16.070 broken into sub-tables for Urban/Rural Areas</p>
<p><i>D. Prevent inadvertent favoring of commercial speech/message over noncommercial speech/ message</i></p>	<p>General Sign Requirements (.020); (B) Message Neutrality and (C) Message Substitution</p>
<p><i>E. Protect viewsheds in designated corridors</i></p>	<p>Deferred to future adoption of Scenic Corridor Ordinance pursuant to General Plan Policy 2.6.1.2: “Until such time as the Scenic Corridor Ordinance is adopted, the County shall review all projects within designated State Scenic Highway corridors for compliance with State criteria.”</p>



How Project Addresses Objectives

<p>F. <i>Encourage individuality among communities and businesses through signage</i></p>	<p>Community Sign Programs including: Community Directional, Identity, Events and Industry Association Signs (.060)</p>
<p>G. <i>Encourage consolidation of signs to reduce visual clutter</i></p>	<p>Community directional signs (.060.A); Design standards for subdivision sales signs (.070.I); Prohibited signs (.090)</p>
<p>H. <i>Improve traffic safety and efficient flow of pedestrians, bicyclists & vehicles to destinations</i></p>	<p>Signs adjacent to public right-of-way: Real estate signs (.030.B.6.a); Freestanding signs (070.E.4); A-Frame signs (.070.H.1); Subdivision signs (.070.I.6); Illegal signs (.100.A); Temporary signs (.110.D); Off-site signs in rural areas (.110.E)</p>
<p>I. <i>Direct persons to various activities and enterprises for maximum public convenience</i></p>	<p>Standards for on-site and off-site directional signs (.030.B); Subdivision Signs (.040.B); Community Sign Programs - Directional, Identity, Events, & Industry Assoc. Signs (.060); Design Standards, Off-Site Subdivision Signs (.070.I)</p>



Project Components

- Amendment to General Plan Objective 2.7.1 (pertains to highway signs) and Policy 2.7.1.2 (pertains to billboards)
- Comprehensive Update of Chapter 130.16 (Signs) of the County Zoning Ordinance (*Note: County Code of Ordinances Recodified 12/17/14; Sign Chapter changed from 17.16*)
- Regulation of signs in unincorporated area of the County (not in the Tahoe Basin)
- Applies to general sign requirements; permanent/temporary signs; community sign programs; sign development/design standards; permit requirements/review procedures; prohibited, illegal, abandoned and nonconforming signs; and signs on County property



Public Outreach/Comment Opportunities

- First public draft released 7-8-13 - Presented draft at six (6) public meetings in August 2013
- Dedicated project webpage launched 1-27-14
- Second public draft released 7-22-14
- Third public draft released 10-1-14
- Public Scoping meeting 10-23-14 on NOP for comments on scope and content of EIR
- Fourth public draft released 12-11-14 with Draft EIR
- Public meeting 1-29-15 for comments on Draft EIR



Public Notification Methods

- Website postings on County home page (News & Hot Topics)
- Email notices to News & Hot Topics subscription list (over 1,400), Long Range Planning subscription list (over 700) and to individuals and agencies that submitted comments (about 100)
- Direct mailings to list of 20 sign companies
- Hard copy notices posted in County Main Library and all branches
- Press Releases distributed to CAO media list & posted on County website
- Legal notices of release of Draft EIR and Planning Commission 3/26/15 hearing placed in Mountain Democrat and Georgetown Gazette



Project Development Timeline

Description	2012		2013					
	Aug	Dec	Jan	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Dec
Board directed staff to contract for Ordinance Update & preparation of EIR	■							
Contract Executed with PMC		■						
Joint Workshop with Board & Planning Commission			■					
Board authorized release of first public draft of proposed Sign Ordinance 6-24-13				■				
Pubic Review Draft (PRD) Released 7-8-13 for 60-day review period					■	■		
PRD 7-8-13 presented at six (6) public meetings						■		
Draft Sign Ordinance Comments Deadline 9-10-13							◆	
Project Update to Board 12-17-13 (included Sign Law 101 Presentation by Randal Morrison)								■

Note: Environmental Review Timeline on Separate Slide To Follow



Sign Law 101

Special Presentation
by

Randal R. Morrison

Sabine & Morrison, San Diego
www.signlaw.com



Environmental Review

- Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared as a Program EIR in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Primary Purpose: To analyze the potential significant physical impacts of the project and determine whether an impact is significant (based on physical conditions when Notice of Preparation was published).
- Draft EIR for this Project evaluates the environmental effects on **aesthetics** and **visual resources**.



Environmental Review Timeline

Description	2014				2015		
	Jul	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Board adopts Resolution of Intention (ROI) 7-22-14 and authorizes environmental review (preparation of EIR)	█						
Second Public Review Draft Released 7-22-14	█						
Notice of Preparation (NOP) of Draft EIR Released 10-1-14 for 30-day review period		█					
Third Draft Sign Ordinance Released with NOP 10-1-14		█					
Public Scoping meeting 10-23-14 (9 individuals attended)		█					
NOP Public Comments Submittal Deadline 10-31-14 (9 individuals and 5 agencies/groups submitted comments - most were project related, not on the Draft EIR)		◆					
NOA of Draft EIR released 12-31-14 for 45-day review period					█		
Public Meeting 1-29-15 to receive Draft EIR comments (12 individuals attended)					█		
Draft EIR Public Comments Submittal Deadline 2-17-15						◆	
Final EIR March 2014 posted on project web page 3-12-15							█



Environmental Review

- Draft EIR identifies and analyzes four aesthetic impacts.
- Determined impact from light and glare may be potentially significant.
- All sign lighting has the potential for light or glare that could adversely affect daytime or nighttime views.
- Both the existing and proposed sign ordinance contain provisions that regulate sign illumination.
- Proposed project will allow on-site signs to utilize electronic (digital) technology.



Aesthetic Impacts

Proposed Project Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Would not result in substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas .	Less than Significant	None Required	Less than Significant
Would not substantially damage scenic resources .	Less than Significant	None Required	Less than Significant
Would not substantially degrade existing visual appearance or quality of a site and its surroundings.	Less than Significant	None Required	Less than Significant
Would not create a new source of light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views.	Potentially Significant	Amend Proposed Code Section 17.16.070 (H)(3)(c)	Significant and Unavoidable

Source: Draft EIR, Table ES-1, Page 1.0-4



Proposed Mitigation Measure

Amend Code Section 17.16.070(H)(3)(c) as follows:

“Digital signs shall not operate at brightness levels of more than 0.3 foot-candles above ambient light, as measured using a foot-candle meter at a distance of ~~250 feet~~ feet from the sign face as determined by the following formula: Measurement distance equals the square root of Area of sign in square feet multiplied by 100.”

(See pages 3.1-10,11 in Draft EIR)

Mitigation Measure based on research by Ian Lewin Ph.D., FIES, L.C. (2008) and the International Sign Association (2011)



Why Mitigation Measure Is Proposed

- To account for differing light intensities from digital signs of different sizes
- Distance a measurement for illuminance is taken depends on the surface area of the sign generating the light
- Ensure digital sign size considered when determining appropriate light levels
- Digital sign light levels can be adjusted for ambient light levels (not typical for conventional lighted signs)
- May result in less light intrusion than conventional signs; With mitigation, impact would be considered less than significant



Light & Glare Impact Analysis

- Digital messages can be changed without physical changes to the signs
- Could result in more applications for digital signs
- Cannot predict location or number of new digital signs
- Cannot be certain light or glare from new digital signs would not result in visual intrusion
- EIR analysis takes a program approach - this impact would be significant and unavoidable



Project Alternatives

1) No Project Alternative

- No changes to existing Sign Code (has not been updated in 35 years)
- Broadly written and provides limited guidance
- Would not achieve project objectives
- Would allow for approval of new billboards



Project Alternatives

2) No Digital Signs Alternative

- Would also not achieve project objectives
- Digital signs will encourage consolidation of signs to reduce visual clutter
- Digital signs may provide economic benefits to businesses - allows flexibility in message changes at any time, reducing cost of static sign production



Final Steps in Adoption Process

Description	2015				
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July
Planning Commission Recommendation Today 3-26-15 to take to the Board on 4-28-15	◆				
Board of Supervisors Public Hearing 4-28-15 (Certify EIR, Approve General Plan Amendment, Approve Sign Ordinance Update, Adopt Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program		◆			
Ordinance Effective 30-days after Board approval			◆		
Ordinance Code updated on Municode					◆

