



SIGN ORDINANCE UPDATE

EL DORADO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
LONG RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

December 17, 2013

Legistar #13-0086

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)
- **January 28, 2013** – PMC presentation at joint workshop with Board and Planning Commission
- **June 25, 2013** – staff presented the Sign Ordinance Public Review Draft; Board authorized release for 60-day review
- **July 8, 2013** – Draft Sign Ordinance Update released for 60 day public review



COMMENTS RECEIVED

Written comments submitted by 42 individuals and the following 7 agencies:

- El Dorado County Agricultural Commission
- El Dorado County Farm Bureau
- El Dorado County Office of Education
- El Dorado County Transit Authority
- Cameron Park Community Services District (CSD)
- Cameron Park Design Review Committee
- Divide Chamber of Commerce



COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS

Section 17.16.	Description	Individual 106	Agency 188
010	Content	2	7
020	Policies for Sign Regulations	5	9
030	Permit Requirements and Review Procedures	7	20
040	Exempt Signs	8	15
050	Prohibited Signs	33	19
060	General Sign Development and Design Standards	18	21
070	Permanent On-Site Sign Regulations	8	29
080	Temporary On-Site Sign Regulations	5	5
090	Off-Site Sign Regulations	3	13
100	Allowed Signs on Public Property	1	6
110	Illegal, Abandoned, and Nonconforming Signs	15	14
120	Definitions	1	30



PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY

- Lack of enforcement seems an ongoing issue – clear enforcement process should be included
- Ordinance should address three distinct groups:
1) Rural, 2) Suburban/Urban, 3) Freeway
- Rural roads are challenging for visitors – existing street signage is often inadequate & hidden by vegetation overgrowth
- Prohibition of new billboards (Section 050.B) and removal of existing billboard strongly supported by County Residents
- Sign companies strongly opposed to billboard prohibition
- The outdoor advertising companies stated that the 7 year amortization timeline for compliance for non-conforming freestanding signs should be not less than 15 years as per State law.



AGENCY COMMENTS SUMMARY

- Emphasis on suburban/urban areas – does not account for needs of rural areas (one size does NOT fit all)
- Billboards and commercial business (brick & mortar) signs should NOT be treated the same
- Bifurcate the process to address billboard concerns separately or develop ordinance with two distinct groups: 1) Suburban with Community Regions and 2) Rural with Rural Centers
- Ordinance should include start date for survey of abatement of illegal/nonconforming signs
- Review process should include a requirement for review by official local design review committees (add to 17.16.030)



AGENCY COMMENTS SUMMARY...CONT.

- Community Sign Program sections need expansion and inclusion of design standards and process clarification (see 17.16.030.A.3 and 17.16.090.C)
- Add section that addresses signs in agricultural, rural and forest resources lands
- Add to Exempt Signs (17.16.040): “Signs and advertising located upon the buses, vehicles and bus shelters of the El Dorado County Transit Authority.”
- Restrict posting of signs promoting alcohol and tobacco use (add to 17.16.050 per EDCOE)
- Nonconforming Signs/Amortization Timeline (17.16.110.C) needs clarification which signs apply and when signs must be abated



POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

1. **Section 030.A.2 – Uniform Sign Program Required.** “No deviations...are allowed...” Most codes allow for deviations (20-25% max.) from size, dimension, elimination, etc. rules for a sign program. *Should deviations be allowed and within what limits?*

Possible Solution: Allow up to 20%- 25% deviations.

2. **Section 030.A.4 – Highway-Oriented Sign Permit.** “...shall be required...within 100 feet of a designated state highway.”
 - Note: 100 feet from highways in all areas Placerville west along Highway 50 would prohibit small business and ranch marketing type signs visible from the highway.
 - *Need to clarify what is a “state” highway. Is it Hwy 50, 49, 88, 193?*

Possible Solution: Apply to only Highway 50.



POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

3. (Section 040.B.6) – Exempt Signs with Limitations - Murals on nonresidential structures with noncommercial messages.

- *How to differentiate between “artistic mural” versus commercial sign?*
- Could define murals on private structures as signs and murals on public structures as art

Possible Solution: Do not regulate murals as part of the Sign Ordinance.



EXAMPLES OF LOCAL MURALS



POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

4. Sections 050.G & K – “Signs which are mobile...” and “Mobile billboard advertising attached to a mobile, nonmotorized vehicle, device or bicycle...”

- *Is the concern of parking cars on streets not related to primary business activity? What about paid advertising (e.g. college students wrapping vehicles to pay car payment)?*
- Does not prohibit wrapped vehicles for purpose of the business.

Possible Solution: Only prohibit mobile signs on vehicles parked on public right-of-way for primary purpose of advertising.



POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

5. Urban vs. Rural Issue

- **Section 050.C – Roof Signs or signs placed above roofline.** Many rural commercial businesses use roof signs. *Should roof signs in rural areas be prohibited?*
- **Sections 060.I.5 – Projecting Signs** including, but not limited to, blade, bracket, and marquee signs...commonly used in historical/rural areas. *Should different regulations apply to projecting signs in rural areas?*
- **Section 070.C.1 – Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs.** *Should Building-Attached Sign Allowance not apply in rural areas?*
- **Section 090.A and B – Off-Site Sign Regulations** (General Prohibition and Ladder Signs). *Should different regulations apply to off-site signs in rural areas?*

Possible Solution: Add a separate section to specifically address signs in rural areas.



RURAL ROOFTOP SIGN EXAMPLES



RURAL LADDER/BLADE SIGNS



Many existing rural signs would be nonconforming or illegal.



POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

6. **Section 090.C – Community Sign Programs.**
Should different regulations apply in rural areas?



POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

7. Section 100 – Allowed Signs on Public Property

- *Are CSDs and other public agencies included in Public Property? Should signs on CSD property and on other non-County public land be exempt?*

Possible Solution to Issues 6 & 7: Create two separate sign ordinance chapters to address Rural/Urban and Community Sign Program issues:

- 1) **Regulatory** – to address signs on private property, and
- 2) **Proprietary** – to address signs on public/gov't land



TIME-BASED AMORTIZATION

Section 110.C – Nonconforming Signs

Amortization:

- The gradual elimination of signs that do not conform to the current sign rules.

Billboard Amortization:

- Under state law, billboards which were legal when installed can be abated (forced out of existence) only by the local government buying the sign or through a relocation agreement.

Store Sign Amortization:

- When a revised sign Ordinance calls for the eventual elimination of permanent store signs (example: pole signs), then a three step process is required.



NEXT STEPS

- Board to provide direction to staff regarding the policy issues raised.
- Staff will continue to work with Counsel to address any legal issues.
- Draft policy will be revised and staff will return to the Board with the revised draft policy in first quarter of 2014.

