EL DORADO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Agenda of:

July 9, 2009

Item No.:

7

Staff:

Jonathan Fong

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

FILE NUMBER:

S09-0003/El Dorado Hills CSD LED Reader Board Sign

APPLICANT:

El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD)/Sandi Kukkola

PROPERTY OWNER: El Dorado Hills CSD

REQUEST:

Revision to an approved Special Use Permit to allow an LED reader

board sign for the El Dorado Hills CSD Community Park at the

intersection of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Harvard Way.

LOCATION:

At the intersection of El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Harvard Way in

the El Dorado Hills area, Supervisorial District I (Exhibit A).

APN:

125-110-09 (Exhibit B)

PARCEL SIZE:

39.5-acres

GENERAL PLAN:

Public Facilities (PF) (Exhibit C)

ZONING:

Recreational Facilities (RF) (Exhibit D)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:

Exempt pursuant to Section 15270(a) of the CEQA

Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION: Planning Services recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- 1) Certify the project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15270(a) of the CEQA Guidelines; and
- 2) Deny S09-0003 since the required findings cannot be made.

BACKGROUND: The El Dorado Hills CSD Community Park was originally approved under Special Use Permit S87-0054. The park was expanded through subsequent revisions approved as Special Use Permit S03-0005 and S03-0005-R. No permanent signage was approved for the park site. The current Special Use Permit application S09-0003 would only address the proposed LED readerboard sign.

To date, the County has not permitted any LED reader board signs. Existing reader boards have either been installed without permit or have been outside County permitting jurisdiction. Zoning Ordinance Sections 17.16.070 *Lighting*, and 17.16.080 *Moving signs prohibited* have been cited as being the regulations that LED reader boards come into conflict. By design and function, a reader board provides for illuminated copy where the copy itself is the illumination, as opposed to illuminating a sign either externally or internally. And, since the copy changes or "moves," the sign is interpreted to be a moving sign.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Staff has reviewed the project for compliance with the County's regulations and requirements. An analysis of the Special Use Permit Revision request and issues for Planning Commission consideration are provided in the following sections.

Project Description: The Special Use Permit request would allow the construction of a new free standing LED reader board sign. The sign would be constructed within a decorative stone veneer cabinet monument. The overall sign would be 4'11" in height and 11'8" in length. The sign would allow for an overall sign area of approximately 20 square feet. The El Dorado Hills CSD logo would be permanently included within the stone veneer portion of the sign (Exhibit E).

The proposed reader board sign would utilize monochromatic LED's and would allow for a maximum of four lines of sign copy. The LED's would be amber or red in color, they have been specifically designed with high display resolution. The LED's would be visible in direct sunlight. The sign would be programmable and would allow for changeable copy. The signage would be maintained by CSD staff located within the administrative building.

Following the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting, the applicant provided additional information regarding the project setting and proposed restrictions regarding message types and hours of operation (Exhibit I).

Site Description: The Community Park Facility encompasses a range of recreational facilities including park play areas, ball fields, aquatic center, ball courts, and administrative facilities. The approximately 40-acre site is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Harvard Way. The T-intersection is signalized with ten street signals and five street lights atop typical light standards. Temporary banner signage is frequently located at the intersection within the County right-of-way along the walkway path in front of the park site. The purpose of the proposed LED sign would be to provide information regarding activities at the park facility and to eliminate the banners that are located on-site.

Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	RF	PF	Existing EDH CSD Community Park
North	R1	HDR	Existing residential development
South	R1	HDR	Existing residential development
East	R1	HDR	Existing residential development
West	R1	HDR	Existing residential development

General Plan: The Community Park is designated Public Facilities (PF). The General Plan identifies the PF land use designation as appropriate for publicly owned lands for public facilities.

Policy 2.8.1.1 requires that development including signage be designed to reduce excessive nighttime light. The proposed LED reader board sign would utilize exposed LED's which have the potential to be significant sources of excessive light. Based on this General Plan Policy, the County has prohibited all signage which utilizes exposed LED's.

Policy 2.2.5.20 requires that all development projects be designed to avoid incompatibility with the surrounding land uses. The proposed reader board sign would result in additional light and glare as a result of the exposed LED's. The signage would be located along El Dorado Hills Boulevard and would be directly adjacent to existing residential land uses. The potential source of light glare would create incompatibilities with the residential land uses and would result in traffic hazards for motorists along El Dorado Hills Boulevard. The sign has been specifically designed to provide highly visible outdoor advertising along the local streets, with a high display resolution to grab motorists' attention.

Therefore staff finds the proposed sign would be inconsistent with the General Plan.

Zoning/Special Use Permit: The CSD Park Site is designated as Recreational Facilities (RF) which permits the existing CSD Park Site subject to approval of a Special Use Permit. Section 17.48.050 of the Zoning Ordinance permits one unlighted sign not to exceed 12 feet in height and a maximum sign area of 16 square feet.

The proposed signage would exceed the maximum sign area provisions of the Zoning Ordinance which would require approval of a Special Use Permit. In addition, the proposed exposed LED design does not comply with the Zoning Ordinance signage requirements.

Section 17.16.070 prohibits any lighting as part of signage that has the potential to create objectionable glare or impairment for vehicular traffic. Section 17.16.080 of the Ordinance prohibits signs which are moveable.

El Dorado County policy has been to prohibit the installation of these signs as they have the potential to create objectionable glare and are moveable which would be inconsistent with the

Zoning Sections listed above. The 'Signage Building Permit Application Checklist' includes the provision that LED and moving signs are not allowed within the County.

As discussed, staff has determined the proposed sign would not be consistent with the County Code.

AGENCY/ PUBLIC COMMENTS:

El Dorado Hills Area Planning Advisory Committee (APAC): APAC reviewed the proposed signage and issued a split decision 4-4. Comments received from the El Dorado Hills Area Planning Advisory Committee (Letter dated February 12, 2009), stated that "agencies...as well as non-profit organizations (churches) have a desire to inform the community of key matters/events happening locally that could positively influence their safety, health or overall well being." A sign used for dissemination of information or advertisement in addition to identification of authorized uses on the premises is an off-premises sign or "billboard" and may be established by special use permit in accordance with Section 17.16.120. As this is a residential zone, an off-premises sign would be considered an incompatible use. Comments for approval and denial have been included as an Attachment to the Staff Report (Exhibit G).

El Dorado Hills Design Review Committee (DRC): The DRC reviewed the proposed signage and has recommended approval and provided comments which have been included as an Attachment to the Staff Report (Exhibit H).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

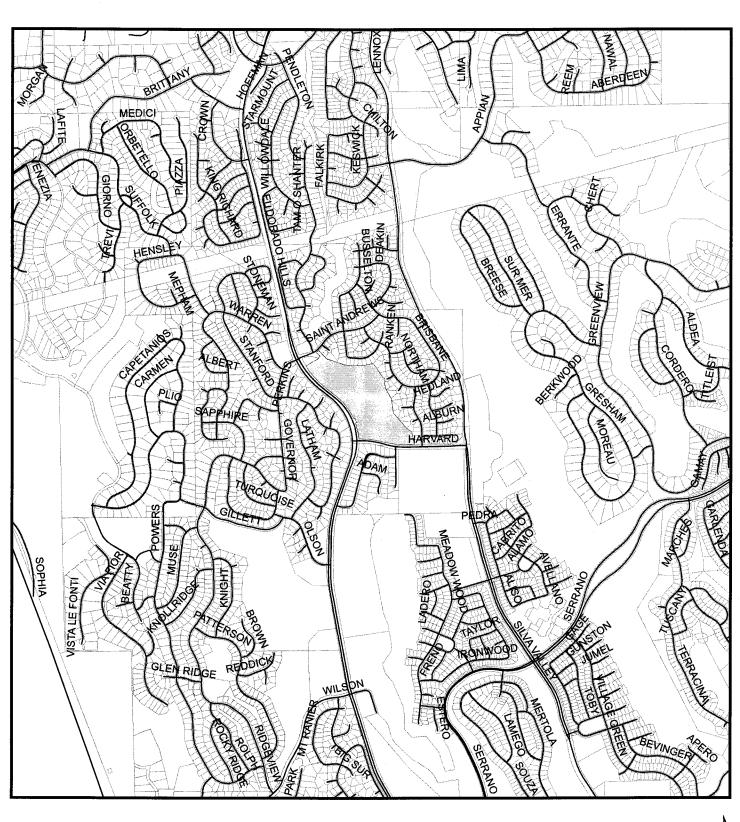
Section 15270 (a) of the CEQA Guidelines establishes that no environmental review is required for projects which are disapproved. Therefore, the project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA and no further action is necessary.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachment 1	Findings of Denial
Exhibit A	Vicinity
Exhibit B	Assessor's Parcel Map
Exhibit C	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit D	Zoning Map
Exhibit E	Proposed Sign Elevations
Exhibit F	Site Plan
Exhibit G	EDH APAC Comments
Exhibit H	EDH DRC Comments
Exhibit I	EDH CSD Signage Details

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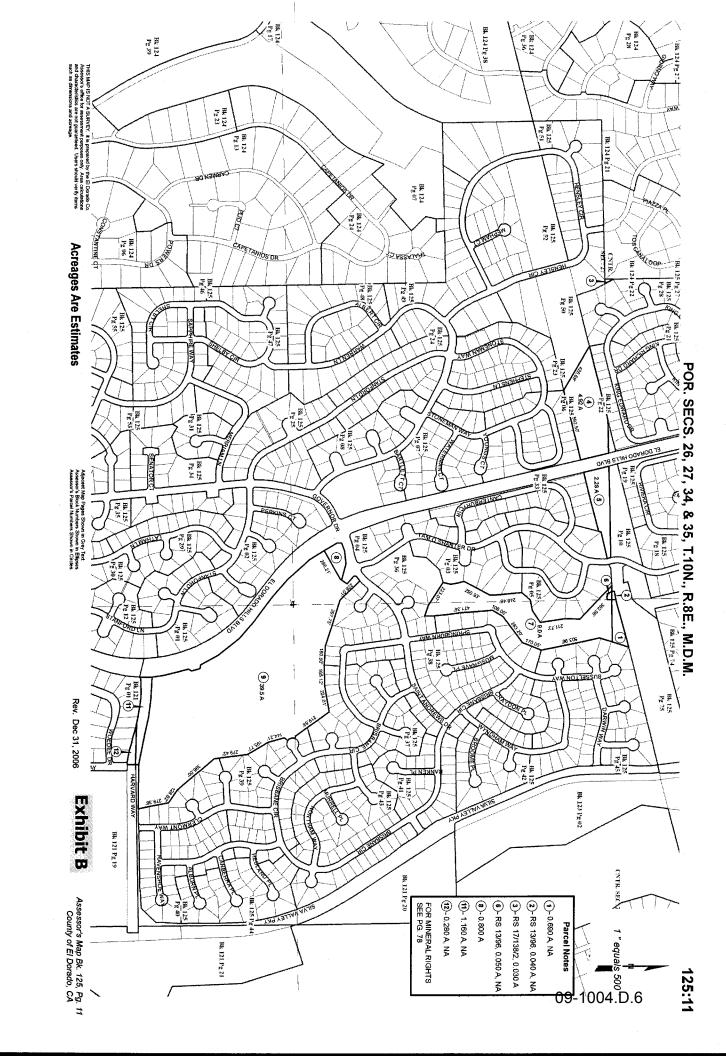
El Dorado Hills CSD Special Use Permit S09-0003 Vicinity Map



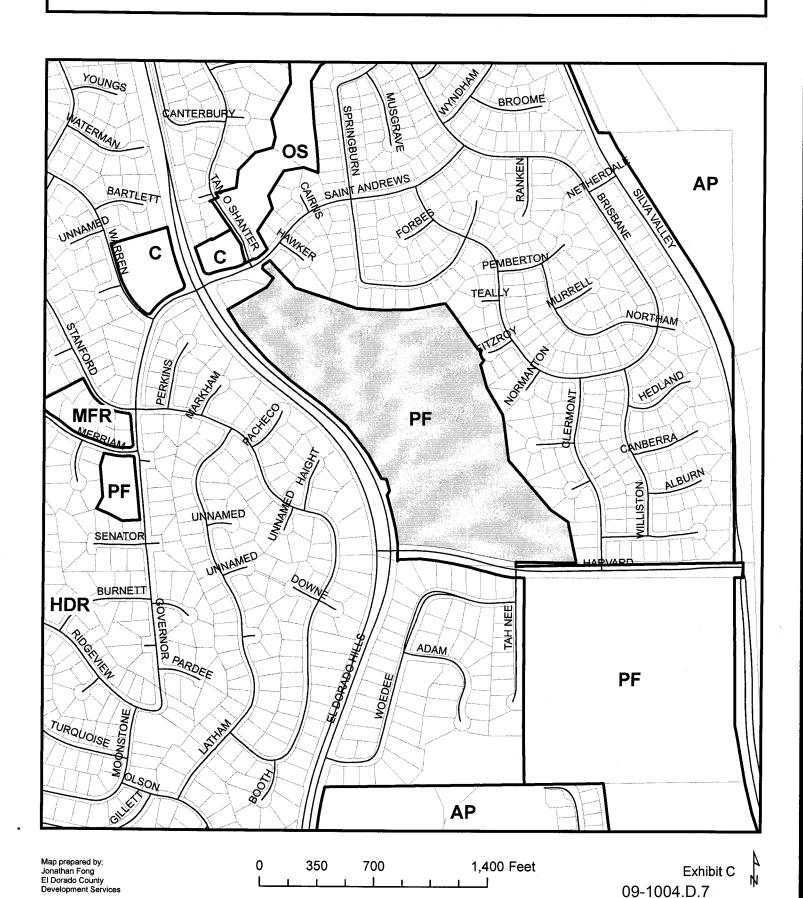
Map prepared by: Jonathan Fong El Dorado County Development Services

0 1,125 2,250 4,500 Feet

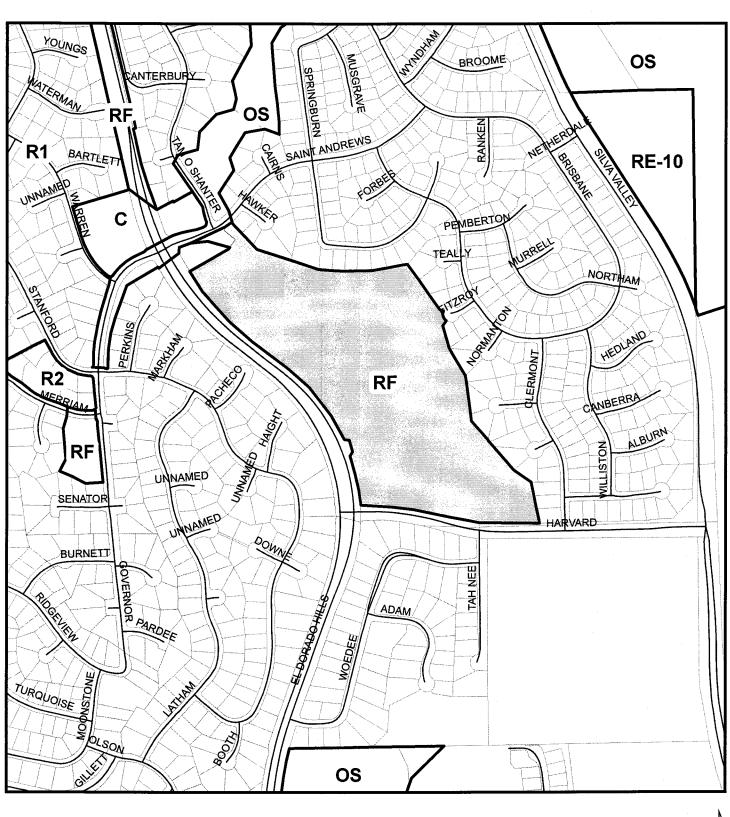
Exhibit A 09-1004.D.5



El Dorado Hills CSD Special Use Permit S09-0003 General Plan Land Use Map



El Dorado Hills CSD Special Use Permit S09-0003 Zoning Map



Map prepared by: Jonathan Fong El Dorado County Development Services

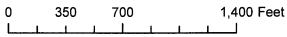
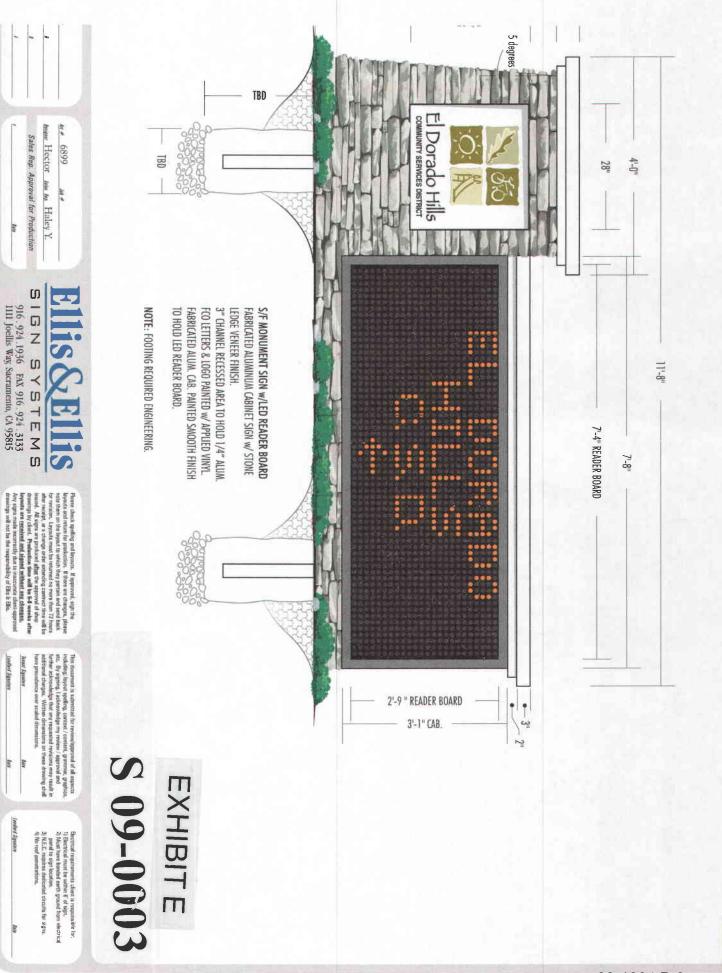


Exhibit D 09-1004.D.8



party of Ellis & Ellis, and were created, evolved and devaloped for use on and in connection with the specified project.

Contractors License #515167

None of such ideas, designs, arrangements or plans shall be used by or disclosed to any porson, firm or corporation for any purpose whatsoever, without the written permission of Ellis & Ellis.

09-1004.D.9

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EXHIBIT F S 09-0003

09-1004.D.10



El Dorado Hills

Area Planning Advisory Committee 1021 Harvard Way El Dorado Hills, CA 95762 2008 Board

Chair
John Hidahl
Vice-chairman
Norm Rowett
Secretary/Treasurer
Alice Klinger
Kathy Prevost

March 15, 2009

El Dorado County Planning Services Jonathan Fong 2850 Fairlane Court Placerville, CA 95667

Subject: S 09-0003 - EL DORADO HILLS COMMUNITY PARK SIGN

Jonathon,

The El Dorado Hills Area Planning Advisory Committee met February 12, 2009 to review the request: A request for a special use permit to install a LED Reader Board. The reader board would be for a community information display at the El Dorado Hills Community Center. The vote resulted in a tie (4 in favor, 4 opposing). The overall consensus was that the El Dorado County Sign ordinance needs to be updated to include the conditions/constraints for which electronic sign boards can be used can be used by governmental agencies responsible for public health, safety and welfare. Residential area signage needs to have numerous additional constraints (i.e. hours of operation, illumination levels in the evening and night time, frequency at which the sign message can be changed-once/hour vs. 5 second revisions). The point is that electronic signage in residential areas needs to subtly provide useful information to the passing motorist as opposed to the distractions of "commercial advertising." Comments from both groups are outlined below.

Comments from the group that conditionally supports the LED sign:

If the special use permit is properly conditioned by County and public complaints/comments reviewed on at least an annual basis by County, then the EDH Community Services District should be allowed to have the electronic sign board. Several public agencies including the EDH Fire Department as well as other non-profit organizations (Churches) have a desire to inform the community of key matters/events happening locally that could positively influence their safety, health or overall well being. To unilaterally recommend the denial of the use of modern electronic signboards to communicate important messages does not best serve the greater good of the community. This group has placed their confidence in County Development Services, our Planning Commission, and our Board of Supervisors to apply the proper conditions and reviews on this special use permit to minimize any negative residential community impacts, and to take action to update the County Sign ordinance to impose a specific set of standard conditions/constraints for the use of this type of signage.

EXHIBIT G

Conditional support with the following conditions:

- 1. The sign must be turned off completely between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am and the intensity of the light must be adjusted as low as possible to minimize glare.
- 2. The sign must not be programmed with moving letters, symbols or messages. The message may change throughout the day but will have no "movement" or action graphics (animation).
- 3. The sign will use two colors and low glare fonts.
- 4. The sign must be low profile and will fit well to the setting.
- 5. The sign must be used only for CSD and other governmental activities, onsite events and meetings only.
- 6. No advertising can be allowed on the sign.
- 7. Sign must be reviewed for conformance in one year at public hearings by CSD.

Comments from the group that voted in non-support of the LED sign:

El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) has applied for a special use permit to erect an illuminated sign in front of the CSD offices, at the corner of El Dorado Hills and Harvard Way. The active screen of the sign would be illuminated by light emitting diodes (LEDs) and may be programmed to show a changing display of text and pictures, though the CSD has applied only for a sign to display text. The intersection has a traffic signal and El Dorado Hills Boulevard is curved at that point. The sign would be across the street from a residential neighborhood.

One-half of the members of the Committee are concerned that (1) an illuminated sign on the corner of a busy signalized intersection on a curved road would be a distraction to passing motorists, (2) the LED sign would violate the dark skies policy of the county, and (3) approval would set a precedent that would allow such signs to proliferate throughout the county. The members therefore voted against approving the application.

By its nature, an illuminated sign seeks to grab the attention of passers-by to communicate its message, and thus could distract motorists. This is particularly troubling since the intersection is adjacent to the CSD's main recreational facility and near the local high school. The issue of driver distraction is important, as is shown by the fact that the county Department of Transportation will not place traffic signals at intersections that occur in quick succession because motorists can become confused, and may run a red light in the first intersection while looking at the green traffic light in the second intersection.

The dissenting members are also concerned that LED signs are not consistent with the county's dark skies environment and thus voted to not support the application. They feel that the application does not fall into a category that has been thoroughly examined. They are concerned that supporting this application would be setting a precedent that may have serious unintended consequences, since no statutes appear to cover this application. However, County policy seems to lean against the erection of such an active illuminated sign.

The county General Plan's vision for future growth in the County includes the goal to maintain and protect the County's natural beauty and environmental quality, vegetation, air and water quality, natural landscape features, cultural resource values, and maintain the rural character and lifestyle while ensuring the economic viability critical to promoting and sustaining community identity.

Objective 2.8.1 of the County General Plan, Lighting Standards, calls for providing standards, consistent with prudent safety practices, for the elimination of high intensity lighting and glare. Policy 2.8.1.1 of the General Plan states that development shall limit excess nighttime light and glare from parking area lighting, signage, and buildings. Consideration will be given to design features, namely directional shielding for street lighting, parking lot lighting, sport field lighting, and other significant light sources, that could reduce effects from nighttime lighting. In addition,

consideration will be given to the use of automatic shutoffs or motion sensors for lighting features in rural areas to further reduce excess nighttime light.

County Code 17.16.070, Lighting, provides that lighted signs shall not be blinking and shall be controlled so that visibility of vehicular traffic is not impaired, and objectionable glare is shielded from adjoining residential zones. (Prior code Section 9430(I)(7))

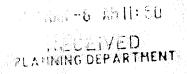
County Code 17.14.170, Outdoor Lighting, provides that it is the policy of the County that the creation of artificial light and glare be controlled to the extent that unnecessary and unwarranted illumination of an adjacent property be prohibited. The creation of light or glare by any person in violation of this Section shall constitute a public nuisance.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact John Hidahl at 916-933-2703.

Sincerely,

John Hidahl Chairman

cc: Lou Rain, Planning Commissioner District 1
John Knight, Supervisor District 1
APAC Read File





Design Review Committee

March 4, 2009

Jonathan Fong, Project Planner El Dorado County Planning Services 2850 Fairlane Court Placerville, CA 95667

RE: Comments on S 09-0003

El Dorado Hills Community Park Sign

Dear Mr. Fong:

The El Dorado Hills Community Services District Design Review Committee (DRC) reviewed the plans for the above-referenced project. The DRC had the following comments regarding the project:

- 1. The Committee recommended the approval of the proposed sign provided that it was not used for commercial advertising, but used for Community Services District (CSD) and community information and events only.
- 2. The Committee suggested that once the sign was installed, that the CSD remove all banners, advertising, etc. currently displayed on CSD properties.
- 3. The Committee also recommended that any organizations conducting activities on CSD playing fields and/or other facilities be obligated to restrict their publicity to this community sign in order to eliminate the display of multiple banners and/or signs within the El Dorado Hills area.



March 4, 2009 Page 2

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions regarding our aforementioned comments, please contact our assistant, Debbie Kossick, at (916) 614-3209.

Sincerely,

Alberta Kasseh

Low The Design Review Committee

09-1004.D.15

Electronic Marquis – LED Reader Board Planning TAC meeting March 16, 2009 CSD Talking Points

Purpose of the LED Reader Board is to provide information to the community about CSD and other governmental agency's events, meetings and activities including health and safety related messages.

- Completely eliminate the number of unsightly banners on CSD property at the corner of Harvard Way and El Dorado Hills Blvd as well as at McCabe Park on the Corner of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Francisco Drive.
- The sign is a public benefit in that it will provide important and timely information.
- This is an aesthetic enhancement to the park on the corner of EDH Blvd and Harvard Way.
- No park identification signage, other than banners, currently exists on the corner or front of the park property along El Dorado Hills Blvd.
- The sign will only be used for CSD and other governmental activities, events and meetings only. All other use will be prohibited.
- The sign is low profile and fits well in to the setting.
- The sign will use single color fonts in most cases.
- The sign will not be programmed with moving letters, symbols or messages. The message will change throughout the day but will have no "movement".
- If desired, the sign can be turned off completely between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am and the intensity of the light can be adjusted
- County public meetings and items of interest could be posted on the Marquis.

EXHIBIT I
S 09-0003

17mm Monochrome LED Displays



Model: StreetSmart® 17mm

The AlphaEclipse StreetSmart 17mm series is specifically designed to provide highly visible outdoor advertising along any local city street. 5-Inch to 22-inch letters, and high display resolution make it ideal for monument applications, lower pylon, and slower city traffic volumes. Brilliant red or amber LEDs with 256-shades/grayscaling will grab attention and bring more drive-by customers into your business.

StreetSmart® 17mm Specifications

Rows	Columns	Case Dimensions	Character Height	4" Characters Per Line	Max Current (Amps)	Weight
16		11" x 5'6"	3" - 11"	16/2	2.76	69.3 ba.
16	128	11"x 7'4"	3" - 11"	21/2	3.69	93.2 ba.
16	160	11" x 9'2"	3" - 11"	26/2	4.61	109 bs.
16	192	11"x 11'0"	\$ - 11"	32/2	5.53	124.7 lbs.
32	98	**************************************	3° - 22°	10/4	5.53	91.7 ba.
32	126	1'10" x 7'4"	3" - 22"	21/4	7.37	110.5 lbe.
32	· 160	1'10" x 9'2"	5 * - 22*	26/4	9.22	140 lba.
32	192	1'10" x 11'0"	3" - 22"	32/4	11.06	158.7 be.
48	96	2'9" x 5'6"	3" - 21"	16/6	8.29	137.9 lbe.
-48	128	28' x 74'	3" - 21"	21/6	11,08	173.2 ba.
- 48	180	5.8, × 8.5,	3" - 21"	26/6	13.82	211.1 be.
48	192	29° x 110°	3" - 21"	32/6	16.59	238.2 lbs.
64		3'8' x 5'6'	3" - 21"	16/8	11.06	164,1 lba.
64	128	3'8" x 7'4"	3" - 21"	21/8	14.75	194.5 lbs.
64	180	38° x 92°	3" - 21"	26/8	18.43	246 ba.
	192	3'8" x 11'0"	3* - 21*	32/8	22.12	496 be.
80	96	4'7" x 5'6"	3" - 21"	16/10	13.82	201.8 ba.
80	126	47" x 7'4"	3' - 21"	21/10	18.43	248,6 lbe.
80	180	47° x 92°	5" · 21"	28/10	23.04	513 ba.
80	192	47' x 110"	3* - 21*	32/10	27.65	586 lbs.
	256	5'6" x 14'8"		42/12	17/230V	1017 lbs.

Pixel (LED) Color:

Red or amber, 256 shades (grayscale)

Pixel Pitch: Pixel Luminance: 17.5mm / .70", single LED

Viewability:

Viewable in direct sunlight

Character Set:

Viewable in direct sunlight

International Character Set, Block (sans serif), decorative (serif), upper/lower case, slim, wide,

double wide, and shadow

Message Capacity:

95 different messages can be stored and scheduled to be displayed according to time and date.

Message Presentation: 27 unique presentation styles

tomatic centering in any mode User programmable logos and

graphics
Programmable hold times up to 6

minutes Calendar scheduling

User Animations:

BMP and GIF file formats ±1°F Typical (optional temperature probe)

Temperature Accuracy:

Clock/Date:

Time in 12/24-hour formats, date in multiple formats

Battery:

Lithium battery for time/date/message retention during power interruptions for at least 1 year

Serial Communication Interface:

Standard RS232 or RS485 Options: On site wireless, telephone or fiber optic modem - factory tested, configured and installed inside the AlphaEclipse case.

Special Features:

Sealed enclosure design prevents external contamination penetration and filter maintenance

Industry standard 64MB compact flash memory for message storage

Comprehensive remote diagnostic

program

External temperature probe (optional) Internal AC power switch for servicing Light colored case, designed to limit solar heat rise internally

Automatic thermal protection

Auto night time dimming (8 levels)

115/230 VAC ± 10% - 50/60 Hz single phase

UL50 Type 3R, IP44 aluminum cabinet

Five-year limited factory depot parts warranty

FCC Part 15, Class A, ANSI/UL 60950, CAN/CSA C22.2 60950-1-03

Communications: Alpha® Communication Protocol

Power:

Case Material:

Limited Warranty:

Agency Approvals:

C-ETL-US listing mark and CE Marking

Operating Temperature:

Mounting:

Module/Case Dimensions:

-40° to 122° F / -40° to 50° C

Steel mounting angle, design facilitates welding, bolting, or riveting techniques.

Front access to all components

Cantilever hinged door for ease of

service 10" deep including steel mounting

*NOTE: Many more sizes available to 5'7" x 15' - consult your Adaptive dealer