



Legislation Text

File #: 11-1020, **Version:** 4

HEARING: Consider extending the previously adopted Urgency Ordinance that imposed a 45-day moratorium on the processing and approval of any freestanding sign permits over certain size; the proposed extension reduces the scope of the previously adopted moratorium. This proposed moratorium would prohibit the approval of only those freestanding signs within one half mile of the edge of the right-of-way of U.S. Highway 50 and State Routes 49, 89, 153, and 193. The proposed extension to the moratorium would prohibit approval of signs: (A) In all unincorporated areas of the County; (B) Within one-half mile of the edge of the right-of-way of U.S. Highway 50 and State Routes 49, 89, 153, and 193; (C) Exceed 80 square feet in size or 15 feet in height; and (D) In all zoned districts. Planning Services recommends the Board take the following actions:

- 1) Adopt the Interim Ordinance, effective immediately and until August 7, 2014 or until repealed by the Board (4/5 vote required); and
- 2) Direct staff to proceed with the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update using one of the following options:
 - (a) Process a Request for Proposals for the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update; or
 - (b) Include the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update to the Land Use Policy Programmatic Update process under a revised contract with ICF Jones & Stokes. (Refer 8/7/12, Item 18)

Background

On August 7, 2012, the Board of Supervisors approved an urgency ordinance imposing a 45-day moratorium on acceptance of new applications and processing of existing ones for signs exceeding 80 square feet in area and/or 15 feet in height (hereinafter referred to as "billboards"). At the same time, the Board also directed staff to process a Request for Proposals (RFP) to comprehensively update the current Sign Ordinance (Chapter 17.16). In doing so, it would be necessary to extend the moratorium to the maximum two year time limit afforded by State law to allow adequate time for this process to be completed.

A revised urgency ordinance is being presented to the Board for approval that would extend the moratorium until August 7, 2014. The revised urgency ordinance includes two changes:

- 1) It would be limited to signs located within one-half mile from the edge of right-of-way of U.S. Highway 50 and State Routes 49, 89, 153, and 193, rather than County-wide; and
- 2) It also would not prohibit the application for signs within its scope; however, those signs could not be approved during the period the moratorium is in place.

This ordinance is a temporary moratorium and can be removed upon adoption of the Sign Ordinance Update, or whenever the Board takes action to rescind, or upon its expiration on August 7, 2014.

While Caltrans and the Outdoor Advertising Act regulate signs located within one-eighth of a mile from a Federal or State highway, the State standard may not be enough in El Dorado County. The one-half mile distance was chosen to capture most of the highly visible locations in the County, due to the range of topography and numerous expansive viewsheds. The revision is proposed to address the problems associated with new billboards visible from these highways while allowing adequate

advertising for businesses not located in highly visible areas. However, as most commercial development is located adjoining or closely adjacent along the highway corridors, the moratorium thresholds allow on-site signs to be effective due to their optimum visibility.

Staff is requesting the Board's direction on whether to continue as previously directed and proceed with the RFP, hire a consultant whose focus will then be entirely on completing the new sign ordinance, or have it done by ICF, the consulting firm currently employed on the Land Use Policy Programmatic Update (LUPPU). Previous discussions considered only one option, but since LUPPU is almost ready to start the EIR process, this might be an opportunity to combine processes.

Staff currently understands that a Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Amendment would include the following topics:

1. Protection of view sheds of important views.
2. Provisions for lighting standards.
3. Provisions limiting displays from parked vehicles, trucks, and/or trailers.
4. Allow advertisement of tourism, employment, commercial, agricultural, and recreational uses and businesses, maintaining local themes, guidelines, and scale.
5. Incorporate opportunities to reduce sign clutter by:
 - A. Consolidating signs into ladder signs;
 - B. Using State programs such as Specific Service Signs and Tourist Oriented Destination Signs; and
 - C. Allowing for Community identity signs.
6. Provisions for removal and amortization, including sign inventory, if necessary:
 - A. Billboard signs;
 - B. Nonconforming signs; and
 - C. Signs within the Scenic Corridor.
7. Special provisions for signs in historic areas.
8. Comprehensive sign ordinance, including topics:
 - A. Temporary signs;
 - B. Exempt signs;
 - C. Content neutrality; and
 - D. Message Reader signs (in appropriate locations).
9. Compliance with State and Federal laws.
10. Scope would include regular meetings with stakeholders, including local sign companies.
11. Scope would include conducting the CEQA analysis.

Contact:
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Action to be taken following Board approval:

Send 1 copy of Minute Order and Ordinance to Dept.