

**April 2, 2015**

**Sign Code Review Committee Meeting**

**Sign Code Issues/Comments**

**Cindy Roth**

- What will the Temporary Sign Permit fee be? The fee needs to be reasonable/minimal.

*Discussion – Chapter 19.620.230 of the existing Code includes standards and requirements applicable to temporary signs, but does not require any permit or review for compliance. The proposed Code includes a permit process for temporary signs that provides for the issuance of a decal that attaches directly to, or is printed on the temporary sign. This will allow Code Enforcement to easily and accurately distinguish temporary signs that have obtained a permit, and to verify the owners of signage and the sign’s expiration dates. The proposed process is intended to be ministerial; meaning that an applicant needs only to comply with the Code standards to obtain a permit. The process will be quick, efficient, and to the extent possible, self-certified by the applicant. These factors ensure that staff time is minimized; thereby minimizing the need for fees.*

*The fee for temporary signs must be established by separate Resolution, which will amend the adopted Planning Services Fee Schedule. Fees are not codified within the Sign Code Ordinance. No fee is determined at this time, but it will be the minimum necessary to administer the over the counter process. If the Committee and Planning Commission recommend approval of the proposed sign code as written, the City staff will evaluate staff’s time to implement the new temporary sign permit process, and recommend a fee to City Council commensurate with the ministerial process.*

- How will the new requirement for a temporary permit affect the businesses in the Downtown mall? Would they now have to get a permit?

*Discussion – The proposal for a temporary sign permit requirement for portable A-frame and other types of temporary signs are within Chapter 19.620 – General Sign Provisions, which is limited to regulating signs that are located or mounted on private property within the City. The signs on the Downtown pedestrian mall are regulated by a separate chapter of the Code (Chapter 19.625 – Private Party Signs Private Party Signs on City-Owned Property and the Public Right-of-Way). Under Chapter 19.625, portable A-frame signs are regulated as “permanent signs”, not temporary signs (i.e., they are displayed on*

*a continuous basis year round). Therefore, the Temporary Sign Permit requirements in the proposed Chapter 19.620 would not apply to the Pedestrian Mall.*

- Concerned that length of time allowed for a temporary sign (30 days max.) is not enough. Suggests that the timeframe should be at least 60 days.

*Discussion – The Sign Code Working Group discussed the duration of temporary signs at length. Due to the concern with extensive sign clutter (temporary signs go up and stay up continuously, rather than temporary), a group consensus was that 30 days is an appropriate timeframe during most of the year. The Working Group did identify a longer display period during the winter holidays, which is highlighted/underlined in the proposed provisions below:*

***Duration.** Unless otherwise specified by these regulations temporary signs may be displayed for a maximum of 30 consecutive days except for that period beginning one week before Thanksgiving and ending one week after New Year's Day. Signs for promotional events and sales shall be removed within 7 days of the conclusion of the event and shall be limited to a maximum of 60 total days per year per individual establishment. The total number of days during which all temporary signage including holiday promotions may be displayed shall not exceed 60 days per year.*

*As described above, there are two factors to consider with temporary signs. One is consecutive number of days, and the other is the number of days in a year. The Committee could consider a longer duration for the consecutive number of days. However, if the Committee chooses to allow for 60 consecutive days, and a tenant uses all 60 days at one time, then there is no other opportunity for display for the remainder of the year, unless the total number of days per year per tenant is also increased. As a general rule, it is the intent of temporary signs to be temporary, and therefore the longer the duration allowed for display increases the potential for sign clutter, particularly in multi-tenant centers.*

### **Janice Penner**

- Concerned with current requirements for portable A-frames in the pedestrian mall in in Downtown, that only allows the portable A-frames for restaurants, but not for other types of businesses on the Downtown pedestrian mall.

*Discussion - The scope of the amendments proposed is limited to the General Sign Provisions - Section 19.620, which regulates signs that are located or mounted on private property within the City. The signs in the Downtown pedestrian mall are regulated by Section 19.625 – Private Party Signs on City-Owned Property and the Public Right-of-Way. Chapter 19.625 allows one pedestrian mall sidewalk sign per ground floor lease space for food service businesses and museums*

*subject to issuance of a sign permit and approval of the Zoning Administrator. Chapter 19.625 is not within the scope of amendments being considered by the Sign Code Review Committee, and therefore the Pedestrian Mall has not been discussed or considered to date.*

*However, if the Committee wishes to recommendation to the Planning Commission & Council to consider an amendment to Chapter 19.625, City staff may carry that recommendation forward to the Planning Commission and City Council, and coordinate a future review with the City's Public Works Department.*

### **Ed Manske**

- Concerned that the changes in the sign code are going to be a little hard to follow and cause a hardship for the retail merchants. We should make it very simple for the sign companies and the merchants to be issued permits and no permit should cost more than \$50.00. A detailed drawing showing the size of the building and signs should be sufficient.

*Discussion – As previously mentioned, with regard to the proposed Temporary Sign Permit requirement, the proposed code is intended to avoid a lengthy process or an administrative burden, and the ministerial requirements are simple and potentially include self-certification.*

*For sign permits in general (i.e. permanent signs), please see response below regarding Dennis Stout's comment on excessive permit application requirements.*

- Concerned that his tenants be able to get freeway signs. Mr. Manske indicated that his center is only 3 acres but freeway signs will only be allowed for commercial complexes 9 or more acres in size.

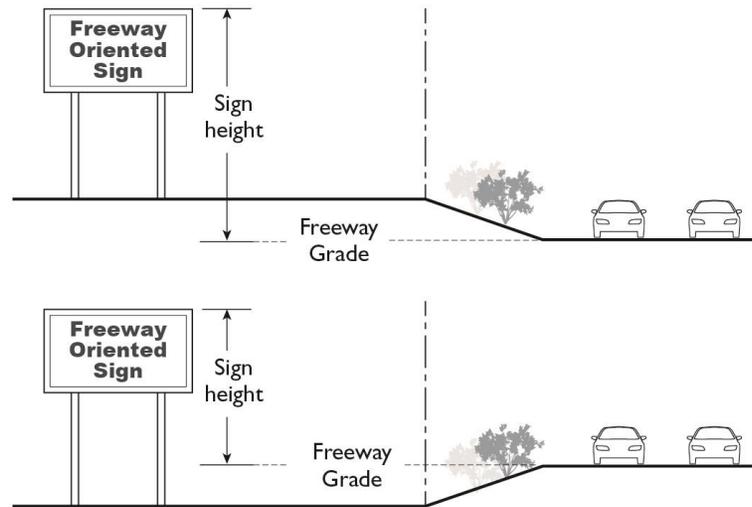
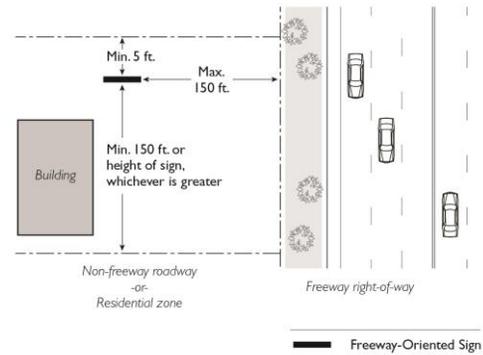
*Discussion – The Sign Committee Working Group discussed at length the appropriate threshold for allowing large pylon type freeway signs, and determined that nine (9) acres was appropriate. The proposed freeway sign requirements are as follows:*

1. *Freeway-Oriented Signs. Unless exempt from the requirements of this Chapter, all freeway-oriented signs shall require approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit by the Planning Commission provided that the Commission can*

*make the following findings in addition to those specified in Section 19.730.040 of this Chapter and if the sign complies with the additional requirements of this section.*

- a. Findings:
  - i. *A freeway-oriented sign is necessary because signage that conforms to the area and height standards otherwise applicable to the site would not be visible to the travelling public for a distance on the freeway of one-third mile (1,760 feet) preceding the freeway exit providing access to said premises; or for a line-of-sight distance of two-thirds' mile (3,520 feet), whichever is less.*
  - ii. *The freeway-oriented sign will not interfere with the driving public's view of a significant feature of the natural or built environment.*
- b. *The freeway-oriented sign shall not be located within 500 feet of a municipal boundary;*
- c. *A freeway-oriented sign must be located no farther than 150 feet from a freeway right-of-way, and only on a property that is immediately adjacent to and abutting a freeway right-of-way or separated from a freeway right-of-way by only a public frontage road, a railroad right-of-way, a public flood control channel, or public utility easements.*
- d. *Such sign shall be setback at least 150 feet from any lot line adjoining a street or roadway other than a freeway or from a residential zone a distance that is equal to or exceeds the height of the sign, whichever is greater, and at least five feet from any other interior lot line;*
- e. *The sign shall be no closer than 1,000 feet to another freeway-oriented sign on the same or a different lot or parcel;*
- f. *All other freestanding and/or roof business signs must be oriented toward the street or highway frontages from which their permitted areas are calculated;*
- g. *Freeway oriented signs may not be used for general advertising for hire.*

FIGURE 19.620.080.B-7: STANDARDS FOR FREEWAY ORIENTED SIGNS



See Table 19.620.080.B for allowed sign height and area.

*As was explained at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, for commercial complexes less than 9 acres, tenants that have building frontage along the freeway would be allowed building signs on the building frontage facing the freeway.*

## **Robin Bell**

- Had concerns with the requirements for building wall signs the maximum of 1 square foot of sign area allowed per 1 lineal-foot of building frontage for building signs and suggested considering a greater ratio. Illustrations of commercial/retail building frontages were displayed on the TV monitor. There were two illustration of the same building with four tenants each having 20 feet of building frontage. One example showed how large the signs could be a 1 square-foot per lineal foot of frontage and at 1.5 square-foot per lineal foot of frontage. In addition to concern with allowed area for building signs, there was concern that the automatic 5 percent increase in individual sign height and size was not much of an incentive for doing a sign program.

*Discussion – After some discussion, the consensus of the Committee was that a good compromise would be to increase the 5 percent bonus in sign area to 15 percent for a sign program. This 15 percent increase, plus another 10 percent increase obtained through a sign modification, could allow for building sign ratio increase of 25 percent. This essentially allows for an increase from 1 square feet of sign area per lineal foot of tenant building frontage to 1.25 square feet. Mark Thomas made the motion for this increase, & Scott Andrews seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve.*

- Had concerns with the provisions for multiple-story buildings greater than 3 stories (Page 21, bottom right corner the proposed standards). For buildings over 10 stories, the proposed Code would allow 2 signs per building frontage located at the top floor where the frontage width is 150 feet or more, maximum 250 square feet per sign up to a max of 375 SF for the Building Frontage. Does this mean the cumulative total of both signs on that elevation cannot exceed 375 square feet? If so, one example of what could be allowed would be one sign at 250 square feet and a second sign limited to the remaining 125 S.F. of the total cumulative allowed. If so, the word “Cumulative” needs to be added.

*Discussion – The proposed standards are reflected below (Excerpt from Table 19.620.080.A: Building Signs in Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Districts). The answer is yes, the cumulative total for both signs could not exceed 375 square feet; and no individual sign could be more than 250 square feet for a building over 10 stories in height and with 150 lineal feet or more of frontage.*

**Wall Signs – Multiple Story Buildings Greater than 3 Stories in Zones where Buildings Greater than 3 Stories are Allowed** - For multiple story buildings greater than 3 stories, wall signs are allowed only on the first floor and on the top floor of a building. The maximum area of wall signs on the first floor shall not exceed the total allowable wall sign area specified in the wall sign standards above. See specific standards below for maximum area of top floor signs allowed in addition to allowable area for first floor signage. For multiple story buildings 3 stories or less, wall signs are allowed on any floor but the total sign area for the entire building frontage inclusive of all floors shall not exceed the maximum allowable sign area as indicated in the standards above.

	<b>4 Stories</b>	<b>5 to 6 Stories</b>	<b>7 to 10 Stories</b>	<b>Over 10 Stories</b>
<b>Building frontage less than 150 lineal feet</b>	1 sign per building frontage located at the top floor  100 square feet	1 sign per building frontage located at the top floor  150 square feet	1 sign per building frontage located at the top floor  200 square feet	1 sign per building frontage located at the top floor  250 square feet
<b>Building frontage 150 lineal feet or more</b>	2 signs per building frontage located at the top floor 100 square feet per sign up to a total maximum of 150 square feet for the building frontage	2 signs per building frontage located at the top floor 150 square feet per sign up to a total maximum of 225 square feet for the building frontage	2 signs per building frontage located at the top floor 200 square feet per sign up to a total maximum of 300 square feet for the building frontage	2 signs per building frontage located at the top floor 250 square feet per sign up to a total maximum of 375 square feet for the building frontage

Notes: 1) In general, each establishment/occupant is allowed at least 1 wall sign per building frontage oriented toward a parking lot, mall, street, driveway, alley or freeway, 1 window sign per public entrance, and 1 under canopy shingle sign per building frontage subject to the standards provided below. 2) See Section 19.620.110 for Sign Program requirements and increase in allowable sign area with a sign program.

- With regard to multiple-story buildings greater than 3 stories, Mr. Bell comments that the sizes are too small and prefers not to have a maximum size on any larger buildings (5 to 10 stories) but rather a review panel that decides if the sign (HARD sign) is proportional (massing) to the background of the building. Mr. Bell refers to “HARD” sign, meaning hard materials of a typical permanent wall sign versus soft material such as banners (i.e. super graphics which are large graphic displays on soft, vinyl, banner type material typically hung from the top of building).

*Discussion – Below is a photo of two of the few buildings Downtown that are over 10 stories. The California State logo sign on the State building is approximately 250 to 270 square-feet in size (approximately 15 feet by 18 feet)<sup>1</sup>. Most of the tall buildings Downtown have less sign area on the top floor of their buildings than this. For comparison, the Marriot sign (example on the right) is much smaller than the State sign. The State sign represents (approximately) the maximum sign area that would be allowed under the proposed standards.*



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<sup>1</sup> The distance on-center between each of the vertical column-like architectural elements on the State building is slightly less than 5 feet. The total building width at the top is just over 100 feet with 21 sections of glass between each of the column features. An approximate width of 15 feet for the sign was determined by multiplying the approximate 5-foot wide vertical sections by 3. From this, an estimated vertical dimension of 18 feet times 15 feet provided the approximate sign area of 270 square feet.

*From the photos, the allowed sign area per sign appears to be adequate and is the same as is currently allowed. As a result of prior Subcommittee discussions, the proposed Code increased the number of signs and total (cumulative) sign area at the top of a multi-story building by allowing for a second sign per frontage on the top floor of a building where the lineal feet (width) of frontage is 150 feet or more. If lack of sign area per sign is a greater concern than the number of signs at the top of multi-story buildings, the Committee may wish to consider limiting the number of signs at the top floor to one sign, and allow for a bit more area for the single sign.*

### **Dennis Stout**

- Commented on the permit requirements and specifically indicated Item Nos. 3, 4, 8, 10, & 11, which he thought were excessive. While the Code indicates these are required, staff does not ask for them with permit applications; if the City started asking for them, this would make the process more difficult. If they are not necessary, then why should we have them in the Code?

*Discussion – Staff agrees that certain requirements, as indicated, may not be necessary, and if required can make the process more difficult than it should be. At the same time, there may be instances where additional information is needed for staff to determine compliance with the Code. State law requires that we specify what information is needed to determine an application is complete, and therefore the City is often over-stating application information. However, staff believes that the items necessary for determining completeness need not be put in the Municipal Code, and that it is adequate to simply state the requirements on the application form. Therefore, staff proposes removing all submittal requirements in the Code. If there is a need to adjust submittal requirements, this can be done more easily on an application form than through a Code amendment process. Staff proposes to change the language in the proposed sign code to effectively state that applications shall include plans, drawings and other documentation as specified on a form approved by the Director of Community Development.*

- Consider the addition of digital (EMC) menu boards for drive through restaurants. This is where the technology is going for drive through businesses.

*Discussion – This is a great suggestion and observation that was not considered by City staff. It seems that that the digital EMC format would be acceptable sign type for drive through menu boards. If there are no concerns/objections by members of the Committee, and there is a consensus by the Committee to allow for them, City staff will amend the Code accordingly.*

### **Mark Thompson**

- Would like to revisit the proposed 100-foot setback requirement for wayfinding signs within commercial complexes, and consider a reduction of this requirement.

*Discussion – The Committee could consider reducing the setback standard. The proposed requirements for wayfinding signs are shown below (Section 19.620.080.C.2):*

2. *Way-finding Signs in Commercial Complexes over 6 Acres in Size. Commercial complexes larger than 6 acres that provide public parking are permitted additional directional/way-finding signs to aid traffic circulation and direct persons to parking areas and specific business functions subject to the following requirements:*
  - a. *Signs shall be subject to the approval of a sign program pursuant to Section 19.620.110;*
  - b. *Signs shall be set back at least 100 feet from any public right-of-way;*
  - c. *Signs shall not exceed 15 square feet in area or 7 feet in height;*
  - d. *The maximum number and location of directional signs shall be as determined by the approved sign program.*

## **Other**

- **City Comment** – The proposed provisions for temporary signs carried over the existing Code’s provisions related to temporary signs in residential zones. Per the current Code, and as proposed, the only type of temporary signs allowed for residential properties are real estate signs, directional signs for open houses, subdivision signs and construction site signs.

*Question for Committee: Does the Committee wish to continue to limit only these types of temporary signs in residential zones, or are there other types of temporary signs which the Committee wishes to allow? Specifically the question is oriented toward multiple-family residential complexes, where temporary signs and banners are often placed in setbacks or other highly visible areas to draw attention to leasing opportunities, grand openings, etc.?*