

ARAPAHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION
March 12, 2024
6:30 P.M.

SUBJECT: LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE PROPOSED SIGN REGULATIONS
AMENDMENT

KAT HAMMER, SENIOR PLANNER

FEBRUARY 26, 2024

PURPOSE AND REQUEST

This County-initiated project proposes amending the Land Development Code (LDC), specifically, Section 4-1.5, Signs, Section 5-4.4, Planned Sign Program, and Chapter 7, Definitions. Staff is requesting Planning Commission discussion and direction on the proposed changes.

BACKGROUND

The LDC is meant to be a “living document” that reflects current practices in the community. As such, staff proposes when and as appropriate and necessary various updates to the LDC to reflect such current practices or otherwise in response to new or changing needs. Staff worked with Clarion Associates to produce proposed revisions to the LDC to match more common practices and simplify the sign regulations and process. The proposed revisions allow for increased freestanding signage depending on the adjacent street context and the size of parcel (s) and are intended to simplify the permitted number and size of fascia signs, remove special sign allowances for specific uses, update and include definitions for certain types of signs, and revise the process and clarify the regulations of the Planned Sign Program.

DISCUSSION AND PROPOSED CHANGES

Staff is proposing the following changes to the LDC:

Increased Freestanding Signage:

The Board of County Commissioners approved a LDC amendment on January 5, 2021, revising the sign regulations to prohibit billboards and conversions of existing billboards to electronic message centers. The approved amendment defines a billboard as any permanent freestanding sign that exceeds 48 square feet per sign face or six feet in height. Since this amendment, staff has received inquiries for freestanding signs larger than six feet in height and 48 square feet per sign face along higher volume roadways and/or higher speed roadways. Staff is recommending an amendment to the LDC to include Table 4-1.5.2: Permitted Freestanding Signs, allowing for increased signage for parcels that can meet certain criteria.

TABLE 4-1.5.2: PERMITTED FREESTANDING SIGNS				
Size of Contiguous Lot(s) or Parcels(s)	Abutting Street Frontage	Maximum Number of Signs per Right-of-Way Access Points	Maximum Sign Height	Maximum Sign Area
Less than 10 acres	Local < 400 ft.	1	6 ft.	48 sq. ft.
	Local ≥ 400 ft.	1	6 ft.	64 sq. ft.
	Collector < 400 ft.	1	8 ft.	56 sq. ft.
	Collector ≥ 400 ft.	1	8 ft.	72 sq. ft.
	Arterial/Freeway < 400 ft.	1	10 ft.	64 sq. ft.
	Arterial/Freeway ≥ 400 ft.	1	10 ft.	80 sq. ft.
10 to 100 acres	Local	2	6 ft.	64 sq. ft.
	Collector	2	8 ft.	72 sq. ft.
	Arterial/Freeway	2	10 ft.	80 sq. ft.
More than 100 acres containing primary civic or institutional use ³⁹⁰	Collector or Arterial/Freeway	2	25 ft.	100 sq. ft.

Fascia Signs:

The current sign regulations determine the amount of maximum wall-mounted/fascia signage by measuring the distance between the nearest adjacent public right-of-way and the location of the fascia upon which the sign is to be placed, to determine the maximum letter height of a wall-mounted/fascia message. The permitted maximum height is then multiplied by two-thirds the length of the fascia or building elevation upon which the sign is placed, to determine the maximum sign area per wall-mounted/fascia sign. Staff is recommending revisions to the allowable wall-mounted/fascia signage outlined in Table 4-1.5.2.

TABLE 4-1.5.2: PERMITTED FASCIA SIGNS			
Type of Fascia Sign	Zoning District	Maximum Number of Fascia Signs	Maximum Sign Area
Primary	B-1, B-3	1 per street facing façade of primary building	0.5 sq. ft. per linear foot of primary building façade width, Max 65 sq. ft.
	B-4	1 per street facing façade of primary building, plus	0.5 sq. ft. per linear foot of primary building façade width, Max 100 sq. ft.
	B-5	1 if street facing lot frontage < 200 ft.	0.5 sq. ft. per linear foot of primary building façade width, Max 200 sq. ft.
	I-1, I-2	1 per street facing frontage of primary building, plus 1 if street facing lot frontage < 400 ft.	
	O	1 per street facing façade of primary building	0.25 sq. ft. per linear foot of primary building façade width, Max 65 sq. ft.
	PUD	Allowance for base district with most similar permitted uses and development intensities, as determined by Zoning Administrator, applies	
Accessory	B-1, B-2, B-4, B-5, I-1, I-2	1 per primary building pedestrian entrance	35 sq. ft.
	O	None	None
	PUD	Allowance for base district with most similar permitted uses and development intensities, as determined by Zoning Administrator applies	

Removal of Special Sign Allowances for Specific Uses:

The LDC currently includes specific sign regulations based on uses, specifically: Office, Industrial, Hotel/Motel, Hospital, and single-tenant Retail uses. Staff is recommending an amendment to remove special fascia sign allowances for specified use to match more common practice.

Update Definitions:

Staff is recommending revising, removing, and including definitions related to signage. The proposed changes are intended to provide consistency and clarify specific types of signs or sign characteristics.

Revise: Sign, Projecting, Sign Height, and Sign, Logo.

New Definitions: Agricultural Entry Feature Signs, Mural, Pole Signs, Three-Dimensional Signs and Vehicle Signs.

Remove Definitions: Political Signs, Directional Signs, Directory Signs, Identification Signs, Project Identification Signs, Special Area/Theme Signs, and Off-Premise Signs.

Revisions to the Planned Sign Program:

Staff is proposing revisions to the Planned Sign Program to clarify which certain requirements in the sign regulations can or cannot be altered and to what extent. The revisions also remove the requirement for Board of County Commissioners approval and propose administrative approval to allow for faster processing and avoid potential claims of impermissible prior restraints.

ACTION REQUESTED

The attached PowerPoint presentation highlights specific areas for which staff requests Planning Commission discussion and direction. Staff expects to take this proposal to the Board of County Commissioners for discussion and direction on March 25, 2024. After receiving direction from the Board of County Commissioners staff will make any necessary revisions prior to conducting public outreach, including the sign industry and business community, and preparing this item for public hearing with the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.

ATTACHMENTS

Proposed LDC Amendments, Section 5-4.1, Signs – CLEAN

Proposed LDC Amendments, Section 5-4.4, Planned Sign Program - CLEAN

Proposed LDC Amendments, Section 7, Definitions

Proposed LDC Amendments with changes highlighted.