

*We are a welcoming, active and business-friendly rural foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history.*



**City Manager's Report**  
**February 10, 2026, City Council Meeting**  
**Prepared by: Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services**  
**Item #: 10.1**

**Subject:** Consideration of Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 25-03 – Title 10 (Zoning), Section 10-4-17 (Sign Regulations) to Allow Regulated A-Frame/Sandwich Board Signs on a defined area on Main Street; and Finding that the Project is Exempt from CEQA.

**Recommendation:** Conduct a public hearing to receive public input on the proposed amendments. Determine that the proposed amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (General Rule Exemption), as the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. Introduce and waive the first reading of an Ordinance amending Title 10, Chapter 4, Section 17 of the Placerville Municipal Code to allow regulated A-frame/sandwich board signs on a defined area on Main Street.

**Purpose:** The amendment aims to enhance economic opportunities for Main Street businesses by allowing limited, temporary signage for specials and promotions, preserve the historic and aesthetic character of downtown Placerville, and ensure public safety, ADA accessibility, and unobstructed pedestrian flow in the public ROW.

**Strategic Plan Strategy:** Maintain/Improve Quality of Life – Strategy 6 Maintain and Update Planning Documents.

**Background:** The City of Placerville's Sign Ordinance (Title 10, Zoning, Section 10-4-17), originally adopted in May 2002, prohibits temporary freestanding signs, including A-frame signs, sandwich boards, and sidewalk menu signs, throughout the City. This prohibition was intended to protect public health, safety, welfare, and the aesthetic and historic character of the community by preventing visual clutter, hazards, and obstructions in public rights-of-way (ROW).

In February 2024, the City Council directed staff to explore revisions to the Sign Ordinance to address evolving community needs, including support for downtown businesses. Recent observations indicate increasing unauthorized use of A-frame/sandwich board signs on Main Street, highlighting the need for regulated allowances to promote economic vitality while maintaining safety and aesthetics.

This proposed amendment creates a limited exception for A-frame/sandwich board signs on public sidewalks along Main Street (generally from Canal Street to Cedar Ravine Road). It aligns with practices in comparable historic California downtowns, such as Grass Valley and Nevada City, where similar signs are permitted under strict guidelines.

SR ZOA25-03 A-Frames February 10, 2026

Reviewed: Adm  Fin  DSD  Eng  CSD  PW  PD

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 6, 2026, received public input, and adopted a Resolution recommending approval of the amendment to the City Council by a vote (3) yes votes, (1) absence, and one (1) abstention, with the modifications based on stakeholder feedback.

At the Planning Commission meeting, the public raised concerns with the boundaries and obstacles such as trash cans and tree wells. The Planning Commission and the public also had varying opinions on the appropriate boundary that included:

- Sacramento Street to Cedar Ravine Road
- Sacramento Street to Bedford Avenue
- Sacramento Street to Mosquito Road
- 82 Main Street (Forni Road Tollhouse) to Cedar Ravine Road

There was considerable discussion regarding the requirement for a sign to be adjacent to the building and no more than 12” away from the structure, obstacles such as trash cans and tree wells, and whether menus would be appropriate content for an A-frame or sandwich board sign.

Staff attended the Merchants on Main meeting on January 7, 2026, to present the draft ordinance to the group and request comments from the merchants. Staff received mostly questions from the merchants. The comments received the following day are as follows:

- In section 2 item 2, I think the language limiting signs to one per building is too ambiguous and will cause confusion based on some of the comments during last night’s meeting. Is there a way to include language to clarify that the limit is one at a time to allow occupants to rotate or place signs when hours differ? If one sign is deployed at any given time during business hours. All said signs would require approval and would share a single permit (which would offset the limited time each business would be able to use one in comparison to buildings with single businesses).

Based on this feedback, staff have incorporated modifications into the proposed amendment, as detailed in the Discussion section below. These include clarifying the limitation on the number of signs to allow for rotation among building occupants under a single shared permit. Staff has retained the boundary description generally from Canal Street to Cedar Ravine Road, consistent with common references to the historic downtown core along Main Street and input from merchants, while noting the range of public opinions on boundaries for Council consideration.

## **Discussion:**

### Key Provisions of the Proposed Amendment

The amendment adds a new subsection to Section 10-4-17, creating an exception to the prohibition on temporary freestanding signs. Signs would be subject to an annual Sign Permit administered by the Development Services Department. The standards are as follows:

Exception for A-Frame/Sandwich Board Signs on Main Street: Notwithstanding any provision in this section prohibiting temporary freestanding signs, A-frame or sandwich board signs may be placed on public sidewalks along Main Street (generally from Canal Street to Cedar Ravine Road), subject to

SR ZOA25-03 A-Frames February 10, 2026

Reviewed: Adm  Fin  DSD  Eng  CSD  PW  PD

obtaining an annual Sign Permit from the Development Services Department and strict compliance with the following standards:

**Sign Permit Requirement:** An annual Sign Permit is required. The application shall include sign design, materials, proposed placement (with photo or site sketch), and content. Fee: Approximately \$50 (or as established by City resolution) for administrative cost recovery. Permits may be revoked for non-compliance and are not transferable.

**Number of Signs:** Limited to one (1) sign deployed at any given time per building, regardless of the number of businesses or tenants, to minimize visual clutter. Multiple tenants may rotate usage of the sign during their respective business hours, with all proposed signs requiring approval under a single shared permit.

**Size:** Maximum six (6) square feet per side.

**Materials:** Constructed of durable, non-plastic materials (e.g., wood, metal, chalkboard) compatible with the historic aesthetic. No illuminated, digital, or reflective elements.

**Content:** Limited to daily specials, menus, or temporary events/promotions. No permanent business identification or off-site advertising.

**Placement:** Placed adjacent to the building façade (within 12 inches of the wall).

- (a) Ensure a continuous minimum 48-inch-wide (4-foot-wide) clear pedestrian pathway along the sidewalk, measured as the unobstructed width between the sign and the curb edge (or any other obstruction), in compliance with Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) and ADA standards.
- (b) If sidewalk width at the location does not permit a 48-inch clear path with the sign in place, no permit shall be issued.
- (c) Displayed only during business hours; must be removed and stored indoors when the business is closed.
- (d) No obstruction of doorways, ramps, fire hydrants, utilities, crosswalks, driveways, or sight lines.

**Safety and Maintenance:** Signs must be stable and weighted to resist wind; no attachment to public fixtures.

- (a) Full compliance with ADA/PROWAG, California Fire Code, and City safety standards.
- (b) Signs must be maintained in good repair; damaged or non-compliant signs are subject to immediate removal at the owner's expense.

### Consistency with City Policies

SR ZOA25-03 A-Frames February 10, 2026

Reviewed: Adm  Fin  DSD  Eng  CSD  PW  PD

**General Plan:** Supports Economic Development Goal ED-1 (promote downtown vitality) and Historic Preservation Goal HP-1 (preserve aesthetic character).

**ADA Compliance:** The 48-inch clear path meets or exceeds PROWAG requirements, ensuring accessibility for all users.

**Fire Code:** Aligns with 2025 California Fire Code updates by preventing obstructions to emergency access.

Comparables: Modeled after ordinances in Grass Valley (Ordinance No. 828) and Nevada City, with adjustments for Placerville's narrower sidewalks.

**Public Communications:** A public notice was published in the Mountain Democrat on January 16, 2026. As of the preparation of this report, the Development Services Department has received no public comments, with the exception of comments received at the January 6, 2026, Planning Commission meeting from Kathi Lishman and Michael Drobesch and comment made by the Merchants on Main on January 8, 2026. Any comments submitted before the scheduled City Council meeting will be presented to the Council during the public hearing.

#### **Options:**

1. Introduce and waive the first reading of Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_, as recommended by the Planning Commission (with edits incorporated).
2. Introduce and waive the first reading of Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_ with further modifications.
3. Continue the item for further review.
4. Deny the ordinance.

**Environmental:** The project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility of a significant effect on the environment. The amendment is a regulatory update to zoning text for compliance with State law, does not approve any specific development project, and facilitates ministerial permitting of A-Frame/Sandwich Board temporary sign permits that remain subject to site-specific review and applicable codes. No unusual circumstances exist that would cause potentially significant environmental effects. The proposed ordinance amendment is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the "common sense" exemption. This exemption applies where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment.

The amendment is a minor regulatory change to the City's Sign Ordinance that allows limited, temporary signage under strict standards (e.g., size limits, placement requirements, permit review). It does not authorize any physical construction, ground disturbance, or changes in land use that could result in environmental impacts. Individual sign permits issued under the amended ordinance would be administrative actions with site-specific reviews to ensure compliance with safety and accessibility standards, further confirming no potential for significant effects.

SR ZOA25-03 A-Frames February 10, 2026

Reviewed: Adm  Fin  DSD  Eng  CSD  PW  PD

Additionally, the amendment may qualify under CEQA Guidelines Section 15305 (Class 5: Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations), as it involves minor changes to existing regulatory limitations without resulting in changes to land use or density. No exceptions to these exemptions apply (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2).

Upon City Council adoption, staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the El Dorado County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse, as appropriate.

**Cost:** There are no material costs associated with tonight’s action.

**Budget Impact:** It is anticipated that the proposed ordinance amendment could generate approximately \$2,000 a year.



Dave Warren, City Manager



Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services

Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_

Attachment B: Planning Commission Resolution No. 26-\_\_

**Incorporated by Reference**

- City of Placerville General Plan
- City of Placerville Zoning Ordinance
- City of Placerville Planning Department file ZOA 25-03