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City Manager's Report

February 24, 2026, City Council Meeting

Prepared by: Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services

Item #: 10.1

Subject: Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 25-03 – Title 10 (Zoning), Section 10-4-17 (Sign Regulations) – Request to Continue Consideration of Regulated A-Frame/Sandwich Board Signs in the Commercial Business District (CBD) Zone to the March 10, 2026, City Council Meeting.

Recommendation: Continue the public hearing and consideration of Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 25-03 without discussion to the regular City Council meeting of March 10, 2026, to allow additional time for legal review of the proposed ordinance language and related CEQA exemption findings.

Purpose: The proposed amendment to Section 10-4-17 would create a limited exception allowing regulated A-frame/sandwich board signs on public sidewalks in the CBD zone, subject to an annual permit and strict standards for size, materials, placement, content, pedestrian access (minimum 48-inch clear pathway per ADA/PROWAG), safety, and maintenance. The draft ordinance (Attachment A from prior reports) was prepared following direction from the February 2024 City Council, public input at the January 6, 2026, Planning Commission hearing, feedback from Merchants on Main, and alignment with comparable historic downtown ordinances.

At the February 10, 2026, City Council meeting, the item was agendaized and introduced, with second reading anticipated for March 10, 2026. However, upon further internal review, staff has identified the need for additional time to consult with the City Attorney regarding specific ordinance wording, permit administration details, potential liability considerations related to public right-of-way placement, and confirmation of the appropriate CEQA exemption pathway (including Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15305).

This continuation will ensure the proposed regulations are fully vetted from a legal perspective, minimize any risk of challenge, and support a clean second reading and adoption on March 24, 2026, if the Council directs following legal clearance.

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 within the Commercial Business District (CBD) zone. It aligns with practices in comparable historic California downtowns, such as Grass Valley, where similar signs are permitted under strict guidelines.

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 of 3 yes, 0 no, 1 absent, and 1 abstention, with modifications based on stakeholder feedback.

At the Planning Commission meeting, the public raised concerns regarding boundaries, obstacles (e.g., trash cans and tree wells), proximity to the building façade, and appropriate content (e.g., menus). Staff attended the Merchants on Main meeting on January 7, 2026, to present the draft and solicit comments. Feedback focused on clarifying the one-sign limit to allow rotation among tenants under a single shared permit. Staff incorporated these modifications into the proposed ordinance.

At the regular City Council meeting on February 10, 2026, this item (ZOA 25-03) was agendized for consideration. The Council discussed the proposed regulations, including enforcement needs, potential revenue from permit fees, and benefits of regulated allowances to reduce unauthorized signs and complaints. The item was introduced and minimal changes were directed at that meeting; the draft ordinance will reflect the current version for the March 10, 2026, City Council meeting, if the continuance is granted.

Discussion: Staff recommends that this item be continued without discussion until March 10, 2026, City Council meeting.

Public Communications: A public notice was published in the Mountain Democrat. 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 Drobesh and comment made by the Merchants on Main on January 8, 2026, and comments from Sue Rodman, Allen Ming, Tony Windle, Kathi Lishman, and James Marquez at the February 10th City Council meeting. Any comments submitted before the scheduled City Council meeting will be presented to the City Council on March 10, 2026.

Options:

1. Continue the item without discussion until March 10, 2026, as recommended.
2. Provide other direction (e.g., hold the public hearing tonight, direct specific modifications, or take no action).

Environmental: No change to prior staff determination: the amendment qualifies for CEQA categorical exemptions under Sections 15061(b)(3) (common sense) and 15305 (minor land use limitation changes). Legal review will include confirmation of exemption applicability.

Cost: None anticipated. The amendments are ministerial in nature and may reduce the number of complaints generated regarding A-frame/sandwich board signs. Any future permits will generate a standard nominal fee of \$50 per permit.

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



Dave Warren, City Manager



Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services

Incorporated by Reference

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