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City Manager's Report

April 14, 2026, City Council Meeting

Prepared by: Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services

Item #: 7.5

Subject: Second Reading and Adoption of an Ordinance to Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) 25-03 – Title 10 (Zoning), Section 10-4-17 (Sign Regulations) to Allow Regulated A-Frame/Sandwich Board Signs in the Commercial Business District (CBD) zone; and Finding that the Project is Exempt from CEQA.

Recommendation: Conduct the second reading of an Ordinance amending Title 10, Chapter 4, Section 17 of the Placerville Municipal Code to allow regulated A-frame/sandwich board signs in the Commercial Business District (CBD) zone. Adopt the ordinance as introduced on March 10, 2026 (substantially in the form attached as Attachment A to the March 10, 2026 staff report), and find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(2) and (3), 15061(b)(3) (General Rule/Common Sense Exemption), and 15305 (Class 5: Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations).

Purpose: The amendment enhances economic opportunities for Main Street businesses by allowing limited, temporary signage for specials and promotions; preserves the historic and aesthetic character of Downtown Placerville; and ensures public safety, ADA accessibility, and unobstructed pedestrian flow in the public right-of-way (ROW).

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

Background: On March 10, 2026, the City Council conducted the first reading and introduced an Ordinance amending Title 10, Chapter 4, Section 10-4-17 of the Placerville Municipal Code to create a limited exception for regulated A-frame/sandwich board signs in the CBD zone. The Council waived the first reading and continued the item as needed for final adoption with a vote of four (4) aye's and one (1) no.

The proposed amendment was previously reviewed by the Planning Commission, which held a public hearing on January 6, 2026, and adopted Resolution No. 2026-01 recommending approval (with modifications incorporated based on stakeholder feedback). The amendment responds to City Council direction from February 2024 to support Downtown businesses while addressing unauthorized sign use, visual clutter, and safety concerns. It aligns with practices in comparable historic California downtowns, such as Grass Valley.

Discussion: No changes have been made to the ordinance since its introduction on March 10, 2026. The ordinance adds a definition for "Sandwich Board or A-Frame Sign," removes "sandwich board"

from the list of prohibited temporary freestanding signs, and establishes strict standards for placement, size, materials, permitting, and maintenance in the CBD zone. Key provisions include:

- An annual Sign Permit (~\$50 fee) with site-specific review.
- Limit of one sign per building (or two for larger multi-tenant buildings with more than four tenants), with rotation allowed under a shared permit.
- Maximum size of six (6) square feet per side with a maximum height of 36 inches and 24 inches in width.
- Durable, non-plastic materials compatible with the historic aesthetic (no illumination, digital, or reflective elements).
- Placement adjacent to the building façade (within 12 inches), with a continuous minimum 48-inch clear pedestrian pathway per ADA/PROWAG standards.
- Display only during business hours; signs must be stable, weighted, and removed when businesses are closed.
- Prohibition on off-site advertising and standalone business identification (allowed only with temporary events/promotions).
- Owner responsibility for liability, maintenance, and compliance.

The amendment supports General Plan Economic Development Goal ED-1 and Historic Preservation Goal HP-1 while ensuring consistency with ADA, PROWAG, and California Fire Code requirements. A 90-day grace period is provided for merchants to replace non-compliant signs.

Consistency with City Policies:

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 Grass Valley Ordinance No. 828 with adjustments for Placerville's narrower sidewalks.

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. Public comments were received by Kathi Lishman at the February 24th and March 10th City Council meeting. Any comments submitted before the scheduled City Council meeting will be presented to the Council during the public hearing.

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 that does not approve any specific development project and facilitates ministerial permitting of temporary signs subject to site-specific review. No unusual circumstances exist that would cause potentially significant environmental effects. The amendment may also qualify under CEQA Guidelines Section 15305 (Class 5: Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations). Upon adoption, staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the El Dorado County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse, as appropriate.

Options:

1. Conduct the second reading and adopt Ordinance No. ____, as recommended by the Planning Commission (with edits incorporated).
2. Conduct the second reading and adopt Ordinance No. ____ with further modifications.
3. Continue the item for further review.
4. Deny the ordinance.

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

Attachments:

- A: Draft Ordinance No. ____
 B: Planning Commission Resolution No. 2026-01

Incorporated by Reference

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