



REPORT TO LAW & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

City of Sacramento

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2604

STAFF REPORT

August 4, 2011

Honorable Members of the Law and Legislation Committee:

Title: Signs for Multi-Family Developments (M11-008)

Location/Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Discussion and policy direction on permitting signs that are currently prohibited on multi-family properties

Contact: Joy Patterson, Principal Planner, (916) 808-5607

Presenter: Joy Patterson, Principal Planner, (916) 808-5607

Department: Community Development

Organization No: 21001010

Description/Analysis:

Issue: At the City Council meeting of March 15, 2011, Council Member Angelique Ashby requested that staff bring forward a workshop on allowing additional signs at apartment complexes. Currently the City Sign Code allows, for apartment complexes (i.e., "multi-family developments"), one detached project identification sign on each street frontage, not to exceed six feet in height, or 12 square feet in sign area. If the owner of an apartment complex does not want detached signs a 12 square foot attached sign is permitted on each street frontage.

The Rental Housing Association has expressed concern that the current code does not allow for the adequate identification of multi-family developments and it would like its members to have the ability to place temporary signs out that would call attention to their complexes when they had vacant units available. They have indicated that they have a difficult time renting units in complexes because people do not know that there are units available or how to get into the complex.

Staff has met with representatives of the rental housing industry to discuss their needs. Their desire is to have a variety of temporary signs that they could use to advertise their complexes. Staff took into account their suggestions and reviewed safety and aesthetic concerns with allowing additional signs.

The result is a proposal that describes a sign package that an apartment complex owner could decide whether to utilize or not for advertising purposes. A package would include 12 balloons, one portable sign(e.g., an A-frame), and one banner. Currently the City of Sacramento prohibits all of these signs for multi-family development. The proposal would be that all of the signs would be permitted and renewed on an annual basis. A small complex (50 or fewer units) could have one package, a medium sized complex (51 to 100 units) could have two packages, and a large complex over 100 units could have three packages. An outline of the proposal is attached as Exhibit 1 for the Law and Legislation committee's review and discussion. If the proposal meets with the committee's approval, an ordinance amending the sign code will be drafted.

Policy Considerations: Policy considerations include whether the committee wishes to direct staff to draft an ordinance amending the Sign Code (Title 15 of the Sacramento City Code) to implement regulations allowing multi-family developments to have additional signs.

Environmental Considerations: None

Committee/Commission Action: None

Rationale for Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Law and Legislation Committee provide policy direction additional signs at multi-family developments. If the committee finds that additional signs should be permitted, and have staff will prepare an ordinance amending the City Code for the review and recommendation of the City Council.

Financial Considerations: If an ordinance was adopted amending the City Code to permit signs for multi-family development, a new type of Sign Permit application would be required. Staff would bring forward an amendment to the City's Fees and Charge report which would cover the cost of issuing the permit and inspecting the temporary signs. Staff is considering the following permit fees at this time:

- One package: 1 hour office and 1 hour inspection, approx. \$302
- Two packages: 1.25 hours office and 1.5 hour inspection, approx. \$415
- Three packages: 1.5 hours office and 2 hours inspection, approx. \$530

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Each permit could be renewed on a yearly basis upon payment of the fees then in effect.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): No goods or services are being purchased under this report.

Respectfully Submitted by:



David Kwong

Planning Director

Approved by:



Max Fernandez

Director of Community Development

Recommendation Approved:



for William Edgar

Interim City Manager

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Attachment 1

Proposed Ordinance Allowing Currently Prohibited Signs for Multi-Family Structures

1. The ordinance will apply only to *multiple-family structures*—that is, “residential structures containing three or more living units.” (Sacramento City Code § 15.148.1170.)
2. The ordinance will classify multiple-family structures as follows:
 - (a) *Class A Structures*—have at least 3 but not more than 50 living units and are eligible for a permit authorizing the following signs:
 - (1) Up to 12 helium-filled balloons.
 - (2) One portable sign.
 - (3) One banner.
 - (b) *Class B Structures*—have at least 51 but not more than 100 living units and are eligible for a permit authorizing the following signs:
 - (1) Up to 24 helium-filled balloons.
 - (2) Two portable signs.
 - (3) Two banners.
 - (c) *Class C Structures*—have more than 101 living units and are eligible for a permit authorizing the following signs:
 - (1) Up to 36 helium-filled balloons.
 - (2) Three portable signs.
 - (3) Three banners.
3. Sign regulations.
 - (a) Helium-filled balloons must meet the following criteria:
 - (1) When inflated, each balloon must fit within a box that has a height, width, and depth of 15 inches (i.e., 15"x15"x15").
 - (2) No Mylar balloons.
 - (3) No internal illumination.
 - (b) Each portable sign, including supports, must fit within a box with a height of ≤ 4 feet, a width of ≤ 3 feet, and a depth of ≤ 3 feet. A-frame signs are portable signs.
 - (c) Each banner must meet the following criteria:
 - (1) Its height must be ≤ 48 square feet.

- (2) It must be securely mounted on a permanent structure that is integral to the multiple-family structure (e.g., the building, a fence) and must not flap or wave in the wind.
- (3) It must be composed of fire-retardant materials.

4. General

- (a) The City will issue a permit only after payment of the associated fee, which will be calculated to recoup the City's cost to issue the permit and inspect the signs after installation.
- (b) Each permit will be valid for one year from the date of issuance.
- (c) If, while a permit is in effect, the permit holder has complied with the permit conditions, then the permit holder will be entitled to renew the permit for another year upon payment of the fee in effect at the time of renewal. Otherwise, the permit is not renewable.
- (d) Each sign must be placed and maintained in "clear vision" zones—that is, the sign must not be a hazard to vehicular traffic.
- (e) Each sign must be placed and maintained on the private property where the associated multiple-family structure is situated. Signs may not be placed in the public right-of-ways.
- (f) The permit holder must maintain each sign in good repair.
- (g) While a permit is in effect, the permit holder may replace the associated signs without obtaining a new permit.
- (h) The City will be authorized to remove non-conforming signs without prior notice. After removal, the City will provide written notice to the permit holder of the reason for removal.

Note: This document is a discussion draft of the basic elements of a proposed ordinance that would allow the limited use of signs currently prohibited. It thus is subject to change.