

**CITY OF MERCED  
Development Services**

TO: Design Review Commission  
FROM: Kim Nutt, Planning Technician II  
DATE: April 14, 2010  
SUBJECT: Adoption of Sign Policy Determination Regarding Interchangeable Letter  
and Electronic LED Reader Board Signs

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the Draft Sign Policy Determination, as prepared and recommended by staff.

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**POSSIBLE COMMISSION ACTIONS:**

1. Adopt the staff recommendation;
2. Modify the recommendation; or;
3. Refer back to staff for other action.

**BACKGROUND**

At the March 10, 2010, meeting of the Design Review Commission, the members voted to instruct staff to formalize a policy statement for the Commission clarifying that interchangeable letter and electronic on-scrolling or flashing LED interchangeable letter signs will only be considered as allowable signage for live and movie theaters and for non-profit lodges and community centers, under the existing practices and determinations. The DRC also instructed that the statement should specify that no other land uses shall be permitted a sign that contains interchangeable letters.

**POLICY**

As instructed, staff has prepared the Draft Sign Policy Determination regarding the signs at issue (Attachment A).

The draft policy is broken down into three points; the first two of which discuss illumination, minimum and maximum size, materials, number of text lines, and LED lettering for live and motion picture theaters and non-profit lodges and community centers, respectively. The 2004 determination regarding the latter land use was integrated into the new draft policy virtually word-for-word from the previous determination, except for slight editing for grammar.

The third point specifically states that no other land uses shall be considered eligible for interchangeable letter signs or electronic LED reader board signs.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is confident that the proposed draft policy will address staff's need for a solid working policy regarding interchangeable letter signs and will clearly relate the City's policies to business owners seeking such a sign.

Staff recommends the approval of the Draft Policy Determination regarding Interchangeable Letter Signs and Electronic LED Reader Board Signs proposed at Attachment A.

Attachment:

- A. Draft Sign Policy Recommendation

## **Design Review Commission Sign Policy Determination**

### Interchangeable-Letter and Electronic LED Reader Board Signs

At their meeting of April 14, 2010, the Design Review Commission approved the following Policy Determination, thereby directing City staff to follow its directive, in lieu of and until a Sign Code Ordinance that addresses the same can be adopted in its place:

For projects within the boundaries of a Redevelopment Project Area, or within three hundred (300) feet of the boundary of a Redevelopment Project Area within the City, signs with interchangeable, temporary letters placed and removed by manual, electronic, or other means of enabling temporary copy to be exchanged shall be restricted, with the approval of a sign permit, to only live performance auditoriums or motion picture theaters and to non-profit public lodges and community centers, per the following guidelines:

1. Live performance auditoriums and motion picture theaters are permitted interchangeable-lettered signs with staff approval or by referral to the DRC within these guidelines only: signs may be illuminated and shall be wall-mounted and encased in a see-through, non-breakable material (i.e. plexiglass) or attached to a theater-type marquee, which shall have been previously approved by the Design Review Commission. There shall be no pre-set minimum or maximum letter size; however, the size of the letters shall be in proportion to the total sign area of the aforementioned enclosed case or marquee. The number of text lines shall be determined by the size of the letters and by actual need (i.e., number of movie screens, etc.). Fixed, non-scrolling, non-flashing, electronic LED lettering shall be considered on a case-by-case basis and shall meet all requirements and restrictions of the City of Merced Sign Ordinance.
2. Non-profit public lodges and community centers are permitted to have interchangeable-lettered signs with staff approval or by referral to the DRC within these guidelines only: signs shall be wall-mounted and encased in a see-through, non-breakable material (i.e. plexi-glass), shall be non-illuminated, and shall be no more than 3-foot x 2-foot in dimension. The number of text lines on the sign shall be determined by the size of the letters; letter size shall be a maximum of six inches in height (no minimum).
3. No other land uses, besides those listed above, shall be considered eligible for interchangeable letter signs or electronic LED signs.