

**City of Venice
Planning and Zoning Department**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 8, 2013

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Scott Pickett, AICP, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Sign Code Update

The October 15, 2013 meeting will afford the Planning Commission an opportunity to have a workshop review of miscellaneous items that are not sufficiently addressed in the current draft of the sign code update. The Planning Commission's review, unless otherwise directed by the Planning Commission, will be limited to the items presented in this memo.

Recommendation of policy will be required for each sign topic outlined below. For each topic, information will be provided to facilitate Planning Commission discussion. In a few instances, staff has prepared draft language to facilitate the establishment of sign standards. Staff seeks policy direction on the following sign topics.

A. Statues/Tube Dudes

We have received direction for the Policy Task Force to prohibit tube dudes that convey a commercial message, i.e. a portion of the tube dude sculpture is directly related to the businesses merchandise or service. A tube dude that does not convey a commercial message would be considered a display of art, not regulated by the sign code. Wade Trim has drafted the following definition of "sculpture signs" to facilitate the administration and enforcement of the statues and tube dudes that are deemed to be a sign.

Sculpture sign means any three-dimensional representation of a commercial message that in form or manner conveys the name of a business or the products or services offered on the premises where the sculpture is displayed.

Code enforcement staff recently observed the following portable statues placed outside by local businesses.





It appears that several of the statues convey a clear commercial message and, as such, would be considered a prohibited sign. Staff seeks Planning Commission confirmation that the above statues would be prohibited signs under the draft sign code update.

B. Murals

The Policy Task Force determined that murals that convey a commercial message related to a business's merchandise or service are considered signs. Murals that do not convey a commercial message would be considered art and not regulated by the sign code. A mural considered a sign would be subject to the property's sign entitlement limitation. The first photo of a mural would be subject to code enforcement under the current provisions of the draft sign code update. It appears that the second photo of a mural would not represent a violation of the draft sign code update because there is no apparent commercial message.



C. Sign Spinners

The following definitions were added to facilitate the regulation of “sign spinners”.

Sign, commercial mascot means a person wearing a costume or clothing designed to attract attention and convey a commercial message.

Sign, human-held means a sign held, carried or worn by a person.

Commercial mascot signs and human-held signs can be prohibited. The Planning Commission may want to consider allowing such signs only as part of a temporary grand opening.

D. Changeable Copy Window Signs

Currently under the draft sign code update, one changeable copy sign is permitted per business. Changeable copy is allowed on either a monument sign or a wall sign. Does the Planning Commission wish to permit changeable copy window signs? If so, the current limitation of one changeable copy sign per business would remain. The changeable copy window sign would be subject to the maximum 50% window coverage standard and staff feels that a maximum size limitation for changeable copy window signs should be established. For discussion purposes, staff suggests the changeable copy window signs be limited to a maximum of 6 square feet.

E. Coming Soon Signs

In their review of the draft sign code update, code enforcement staff noted that there is no provision for opening soon signs. Wade Trim has prepared for your review the following draft language on the subject that incorporates temporary coming soon signs into the existing draft standards for temporary grand opening signs. Staff seeks Planning Commission approval of the following draft language on coming soon signs.

- (1) Grand opening of a new business. Temporary signs used in conjunction with the grand opening of a new business, including coming soon signs, are permitted subject to the following standards:
 - a. The maximum duration of the display of temporary coming soon signs shall be 30 consecutive days. The maximum duration of the display of temporary grand opening signs shall be 30 consecutive days. Coming soon signs and grand opening signs shall not be displayed concurrently.
 - b. For the purpose of this section, a new business is defined as a business that has been issued a new city local business tax receipt and has been in operation less than three (3) months.
 - c. Animated, flashing, wind, whirling, human-held, commercial mascot and other similar signs are permitted as temporary grand opening signs, but shall not be permitted as coming soon signs.
-
- d. The maximum area of temporary coming soon or grand opening signage shall be one (1) square foot per linear foot of building frontage or tenant space with public entrance or 50 square feet total, whichever is less.
 - e. The temporary coming soon sign or grand opening sign shall be located on the lot in which the business is located. With the written consent of the property owner/manager, temporary grand opening signs may be located adjacent to driveways.

F. Residential Project Promotion Signs

There are several issues related to this subject. The primary issue is that the practice of inviting the public into a subdivision with lots and homes for sale does not comply with the following draft standards in the sign code update.

- (8) Real estate signs to advertise a developer's or development company's sale of vacant lots or showing of model homes in any approved subdivision subject to the following standards:

- a. One (1) non-illuminated sign per entrance to the subdivision from a public street. The maximum area of the entrance sign face shall be 16 square feet. The maximum height of the entrance sign, including sign structure, shall be eight (8) feet.
- b. One (1) non-illuminated sign per each on-site sales office. The maximum area of the sales office sign shall be four (4) square feet.
- c. One (1) non-illuminated sign per each on-site model home in the development. The maximum area of the model home sign shall be four (4) square feet.
- d. All sign(s) shall be removed when five percent (5%) of the total lots in the last phase of the subdivision remain unsold or five (5) lots in the last phase of the subdivision remain unsold, whichever is greater.

In contrast, below are photos of signage in use to advertise the sale of residential homes or lots.



The Planning Commission received input from a representative of the Bay Indies sales office during the public . To deal with this situation, the scope of the above draft standards needs to be increased to regulate “residential communities” that have on-going sales of residential homes, including mobile homes.

The amount and/or type of promotional signage may need to be increased to be more consistent with current practice. Staff’s primary concern is off-site advertisement of residential products. Advertisement should be limited to the frontage of the residential project. Staff feels that there is a need to regulate the “sign package” on the public streets that provide access to the residential development. However, may not be necessary to be overly concerned about promotional signage within the subdivision (e.g. at the sales office, model home or directional signage to home or lots for sale). Such signage is not visible to the general public except for existing and potential future residents of the subdivision. In addition, real estate sales promotion signage within a subdivision is likely regulated or controlled by a homeowner’s association or similar entity.

In summary, staff is suggesting there be specific standards for promotional signage along public streets that provide access to a subdivision but more relaxed standards for such signage once inside the subdivision. For instance, more relaxed sign standards inside a subdivision may only address the types of signs that are permitted and when, near build-out of the subdivision, the signs are required to be removed.

G. Enforcement of Non-Conforming/Prohibited Portable Signs

The idea here is to somehow create a mechanism that would allow property owners with portable signs some period of time after the effective date of the sign code update to comply with new portable sign regulations. This would give the property owners time to develop alternative means of advertising that is provided by the sign code update. Clearly, the City Attorney will need to be involved in the discussion of this topic. Staff has identified the following two possible approaches to provide additional time to achieve compliance with the sign code update regulation of portable signs.

1. Establish a separate effective date for the portable sign provisions.
2. Establish a short-term amortization period (e.g. 60 to 90 days) for non-conforming portable signs to come into compliance with the new portable sign regulations.

H. Photographic Illustrations in Sign Code

Photos can be used in the sign code to illustrate examples of sign types and photos can also be used to illustrate how standards are applied. Below is an example of how photos have been used in local sign code. Does the Planning Commission support the use of photos in the sign code update?

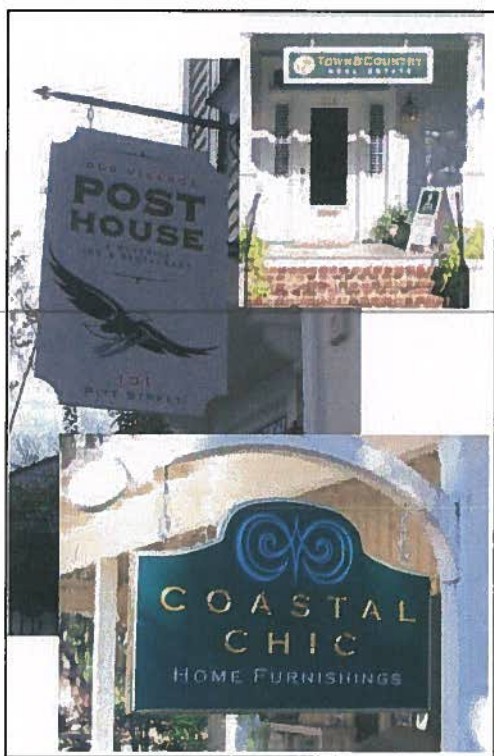
3. Configurations:

- a. Maximum gross area of wall signs on a given facade shall not exceed 10% of the facade area, with maximum size of any one sign limited to 25 square feet.
- b. Maximum area of any single freestanding sign shall not exceed 5 square feet per side and 5 feet in height. Freestanding on-premise signs along SC Highway 46 and Bruin Road shall not exceed 25 square feet and 8 feet in height

*Signs shall maintain a minimum clear height above sidewalks of 8 feet.

- c. All other sign types shall not exceed 5 square feet per side.
- d. No more than 2 signs may be displayed per address.
- e. Freestanding signs shall be mounted either parallel or perpendicular to the right-of-way.

Signs mounted projecting from the facade:



Signs mounted flat against the façade:

