

**From:** [Visual Concepts](#)  
**To:** [Geoff W](#)  
**Cc:** [Jeff Mccuen](#); [Rob M Shilling](#); [Dunn, Jacob](#); [Ford, John](#); [Bohn, Rex](#); [Bushnell, Michelle](#); [Jeff Slack](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Updated Draft Sign Ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, October 23, 2023 11:50:07 AM

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Thanks for including me, Geoff. I do not own or service billboards in our community, but am often involved in various signage projects. I also employ 9 people locally. Many of our clients, other small, independent businesses, have been forced to leave Humboldt in the last few years. Piles of red tape like this make success for an independent business in our county next to impossible. High taxes and insurance rates mean I struggle to pay my employees what I consider to be a living wage.

As with Geoff's employees, homeownership in our community is next to impossible. I do all that I can for my crew, but I often am kept up at night knowing that their hard work, dedication and skill set seems to be not as important or valued in our community as it should be. Geoff's language is strong of course, but his position that the drug addicts and vagrants in our town are given priority and many more tools to try to improve their lot in life than hard working people supporting their families and going to work everyday rings true to me. We place so much energy, money and time to block businesses simply being able to survive locally.

I've been in business for 16 years locally. I've been sent endless invoices from the state and county. Been subject to ridiculous inspections, penalties, and red tape. No one, not one person or government entity has ever stopped by to make their support known. No one has ever offered tools, resources, or even a pat on the back or appreciation for folks like us who are working tirelessly to keep our local economy going. If we can't begin to make Humboldt a place that attracts business, or simply allows it to exist, we'll see the continued degradation of our community, streets and buildings. Even more shuttered storefronts where no one can afford to do business, a greater number of down-and-out people wandering the streets.

Contrary to what you may think, Geoff and I both consider ourselves to be environmentalists. That's a big part of the reason we choose to live here. However, we must find a balance where businesses are allowed to conduct operations without constantly being hassled or trying to work with one hand tied behind our backs. We both love Humboldt, and this is our home. It's just disheartening when more hassles like this are constantly the norm, and no one at all seems to be looking out for us small businesses. We preach about supporting local in our area, we say we value our locally owned businesses, but I fear a time soon when the only jobs left in Humboldt will be those provided by the government, or major corporations.

My rant here doesn't specifically speak to the ordinance Geoff is referring to, but it's just more of the same issues for me. From manufacturing, agriculture, retail, we're all suffering, and we could really use some help. the boot has to be lifted from the neck of local folks and the businesses they operate or the future of our beloved area may be in jeopardy. Thanks for hearing me out. Geoff, if I can help or be an ally in any way, please reach out. We're in this together, fighting for the opportunity to simply exist for ourselves, our families, our employees, and our community.

On Mon, Oct 23, 2023 at 10:45 AM Geoff W <[geoffwills33@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffwills33@yahoo.com)> wrote:

John/ Jacob-

I am a little caught off guard by the new updated sign ordinance. I also requested to see the new ordinance when you were done and you both said you'd make sure I was given it, instead I was forwarded it by another local business owner whose concerned with the counties attack on my business. I'm pretty bummed on that and it kinda feels on purpose with these changes.

How did the off-premise signs(billboards) section change so much? There was no language around limiting maintenance of billboards in the prior draft sign ordinance and there was absolutely no discussing such language in the focus groups meeting about the sign ordinance. When and how did these sections get added? It's very obvious what the county is doing in adding sections 87.3.3.5.3-.6. to the sign ordinance. The county is adding red tape via permit requirements to maintenance activities in an effort to prevent maintenance from occurring.

Section 87.3.3.5.6 is just an extra stab in the back given the areas billboards are in, the tweaker population that lives beneath them, and often the reason for our maintenance activities. It is an everyday occurrence that our billboards and property which they reside on are the victim of trespassing and other crimes from homeless tweakers, our boards are graffitied and vandalized by these vagrants and the county wants to, by ordinance, declare your tax paying and contributing members of our community the "public nuisance" when we repair our damaged property.

Section 87.3.3.5.2 if factually incorrect. Billboards are currently legal in the county code and have been forever, example billboards on central ave in Mckinerville and Myrtle Ave, outside Eureka city limits, are legally permitted structures. They are not within 660' of a Caltrans ROW therefore they do not require an ODA permit. Them not having an ODA permit does not deem them to not be billboards and is not grounds for their removal.

This all begs the questions of what is the county doing? Why is it trying to run business out of our area, why is it trying to put one of its local business and it's 7 employees out of business? I pay my employees \$25-32/hr, give them health and other benefits. That's 3x federal minimum wage and guess what, none of them can afford a house! A mortgage on the average house in Humboldt is \$4,200/month. I understand we do need new sign ordinances but maybe instead of fighting signs, billboards, and jobs you could draft some quick ordinances that help the working members of your community afford to live in your community instead of making it harder.

Jeff M/Rob- Here is the link to the new sign ordinance, please have your attorney draft a response asap.

<https://humboldt.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12370683&GUID=19D8F0FD-6A42-4063-A5ED-374C3CCAB88C>

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