

**RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

**Resolution Number 23-\_\_\_\_\_**

**Sign Ordinance**

**Recommending that the Board of Supervisors make the required findings to adopt the Inland version of the Sign Ordinance.**

**WHEREAS**, Humboldt County initiated the zoning ordinance changes herein to implement its General Plan Scenic Resources Element, which directs the County to amend the sign ordinance to implement adopted policies for off-premise billboards and to consider other revisions to ensure community compatibility as set forth in SR-IM2; and

**WHEREAS**, California Government Code Section 65850, et seq. authorizes counties to regulate land use, and to adopt and amend general plans and zoning and building ordinances for such purposes, and sets forth procedures governing the adoption and amendment of such ordinances; and

**WHEREAS**, the Humboldt County Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Sign Ordinance on November 2, 2023; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Planning Commission makes all the following findings:

1. The proposed ordinance to implement the General Plan is in the public interest; and
2. The proposed ordinance to implement the General Plan is consistent with the General Plan; and
3. The proposed ordinance does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law.

**REQUIRED FINDINGS OF APPROVAL**

**I. Required Findings of Approval:**

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA).**

**1. FINDING:** The proposed zoning amendment is exempt from environmental review.

**EVIDENCE:** a) The ordinance is exempt from environmental review under §15307, actions by regulatory agencies for protection of natural

resources, and §15308, actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment.

## **PUBLIC INTEREST.**

**2. FINDING:** Humboldt County Code Section 312-50.3.1, the Humboldt County General Plan, and state General Plan Law stipulate that amendments to the zoning code must be in the public interest. The proposed amendment is in the public interest.

**EVIDENCE:** a) The proposed ordinance would set standards for principally permitted signs and create new permitting requirements for signs in all zones. The type of signage and project area will determine the potential for adverse impacts and permitting pathways. Proposed projects with low potential for adverse impacts would be principally permitted, while high scale projects with potential to cause adverse impacts on the health, safety and welfare of the public, on the aesthetic values, and on the County's environmentally sensitive habitat areas would require discretionary review. The proposed ordinance advances the implementation measures, goals, policies and standards identified in the Humboldt County General Plan and is therefore in the public interest.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN.**

**3. FINDING:** Humboldt County Code Section 312-50.3.2 states that amendments to the Zoning Code must be consistent with the General Plan. The proposed Inland Sign Ordinance is consistent with the General Plan.

**EVIDENCE:** a) The Sign Ordinance implements the Conservation and Open Space Element. The proposed ordinance incorporates the Humboldt County General Plan's goals, policies and standards as directed in implementation measure SR-IM2. Implementation Measure SR-IM2 provides a broad scope for revisions to the sign ordinance, which have been achieved by reformatting the ordinance to provide better structure, incorporating a robust purpose and applicability statement, revising previous requirements to better suit the needs of the public, and instituting new regulations to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

b) Policy SR-P4 directs the County to limit the term of new and existing off-premise billboards by ordinance to provide for removal consistent with the Outdoor Advertising Act and prohibit the construction of new off-premise billboards along mapped Scenic Highways and coastal views. The proposed ordinance has provided an opportunity for the County to set a term limit for existing billboards if they deem it necessary and have the

available funding for removal as required by the Outdoor Advertising Act. The development of new billboards would be prohibited, which has been supported by public review and would benefit the County when meeting the Scenic Highway Guidelines.

- c) Policy SR-P5 aims to prohibit construction of billboards in mapped sensitive, habitat areas. The ordinance has provided clear guidance for future development of billboards in environmentally sensitive habitat areas. To ensure protection of these areas existing billboards maintenance activities will be reviewed by the Planning Division upon application of a Building Permit to ensure that the proposed work will not negatively impact a sensitive habitat. If the proposed work may disturb a sensitive habitat the applicant will be required to secure any necessary permits to ensure that impacts are less than significant. The proposed ordinance meets these objectives by creating a term limit for billboards, prohibiting billboards on Scenic Highways, and reviewing impacts to environmentally sensitive habitat areas.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLANNING LAW.**

**4. FINDING:** Humboldt County Code Section 312-50.3.4 requires any proposed amendment must not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law, unless specific findings are made. The proposed amendment does not limit the number of housing units which may be constructed on an annual basis.

**EVIDENCE:** a) The Sign Ordinance does not propose the development of residential structures and therefore will not impact the residential density of Humboldt County.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Humboldt:

1. Hold a public hearing in the manner prescribed by law;
2. Adopt the ordinance amending the Zoning Regulations of the Inland Zoning Ordinance (Section 314 of Title III, Division 1, Chapter 4 of Humboldt County Code) as shown in Attachment 1 of this staff report;
3. Adopt the ordinance amending the Zoning Regulations of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (Section 313 of Title III, Division 1, Chapter 3 of Humboldt County Code) as shown in Attachment 2 of this staff report;
4. Direct the Planning Staff to prepare and file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk and Office of Planning and Research.

The foregoing Resolution is hereby passed and adopted after review and consideration of all the evidence on **November 2, 2023**.

The motion was made by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ and the following ROLL CALL vote:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS:

NOES: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS:

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS:

DECISION:

I, John Ford, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct record of the action taken on the above-entitled matter by said Commission at a meeting held on the date noted above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
John H. Ford, Director  
Planning and Building Department