City Council – Electronic Reader Boards

Proposed Sign Code Amendments
October 6, 2009
Eastlake and Skyline High School expressed an interest in converting the school’s existing non-digital reader board sign into an electronic reader board sign (also referred to as a “Changing Message Center sign”).

The existing sign requires a significant amount of time to modify messages and generally does not meet the needs of the high schools.
The Planning Commission and staff held a public meeting on April 2, 2009 and a public hearing on May 7, 2009 that was continued to July 2, 2009.

On July 2, 2009, the Planning Commission reviewed three options for a code amendments:

- **Option 1** - Free-standing electronic reader board sign anywhere on school property including locations visible from 228th Avenue. Primary audience is the general community.

- **Option 2** - Electronic reader board sign attached to a school wall. Primary audience are students and parents associated with the school.

- **Option 3** – No Action Alternative
The Planning Commission recommended (5 in the affirmative, 2 in the negative) that the City Council pursue the “No Action Alternative.”

The Planning Commission based this recommendation upon a variety of concerns:

- A comprehensive review of the sign code is needed
- The amendment was premature until after the Town Center development regulations for signs are adopted
- Aesthetic impacts associated with several signs of this type along 228th Avenue
- The City Council should consult with the City Attorney prior to taking action
City Council – Next Steps

- October 6, 2009 – First Reading and Public Hearing
  - Public Testimony
  - Policy Discussion and direction to Staff
- October 20, 2009 - Second Reading and Public Hearing
“Fourth” Option

Pilot project approach:

- Code amendment to allow for a pilot program
- Limited in location and duration (e.g. one mile on 228th Avenue, encompassing the three high schools for 5 years)
The City may regulate signs based upon a content neutral standard rather than a content specific standard.
Electronic Reader Boards – Other Jurisdictions

City of Bellevue:
- Allowed in residential zones as a noncommercial public service sign.
- Some limitations on design, rate that the text changes, hours of operation
- Consistent with Option 1

City of Kirkland:
- Allowed at Juanita and Lake Washington High Schools
- Some limitations on design, rate that the text changes, hours of operation
- Consistent with Option 1
Electronic Reader Boards – Other Jurisdictions

- City of Redmond
  - Allowed in most zoning designations
  - Minimum design standards beyond setbacks and illumination