2014 Sign Code Update
Title 17 Kitsap County Code

Staff Report to Planning Commission

May 27, 2014

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Planning and Environmental Programs
Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Planning Commission regarding the proposed update to Kitsap County Code Title 17, “Sign Code”.

Location

The Sign Code applies to all areas within unincorporated Kitsap County including Urban Growth Areas (UGA), Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD), and rural areas. The Sign Code does not apply to incorporated cities (Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Port Orchard, Poulsbo) and Tribal property, and has only limited application to federal lands and facilities.

SEPA Evaluation

Based on a review of the Kitsap County Draft Sign Code and supporting information, it is anticipated that a determination of non-significance will be issued for the draft document recommended by the Planning Commission in accordance with WAC 197-11-340.

Public Participation

The planning process for the 2014 Sign Code Update began in July of 2013 with the recognition that public participation is a key element of the Sign Code update process. The public process to this date has included outreach efforts as noted below:

- In mid 2013, DCD staff organized an ad hoc work team comprised of diverse interests within Kitsap County. Between July 2013 and January 2014, the Sign Code work team met on various topics related to the Sign Code update and developed preliminary draft Sign Code language for the public to review prior to Planning Commission meetings. The recommendations from the work team are reflected in the proposed Kitsap County Draft Sign Code.

- In late 2013, staff set up a Sign Code webpage within the Kitsap County website. The webpage serves as a hub for documents under review, feedback received, and announcements of public meetings or notifications. A comment portal allows for submittal of preliminary public comments and formal comments for Public Hearings via the webpage.

- In early 2014, DCD staff conducted initial outreach events through presentations to organizations throughout Kitsap County to solicit preliminary public feedback. Outreach events included Kingston Citizens Advisory Council, Kingston Chamber of Commerce, Suquamish Citizens Advisory Council, Central Kitsap Community Council, Silverdale Chamber of Commerce, Bremerton Chamber of Commerce, Manchester Citizens Advisory Committee, Port Orchard Chamber of Commerce, Kitsap Home Builders Association, DCD Advisory Group, Kitsap County Association of Realtors.
In March through April 2014, DCD staff constructed and reviewed the preliminary public feedback matrix. The Kitsap County Draft Sign Code was developed as a result of public and internal reviews.

During May 2014, DCD staff briefed the Planning Commission on the Kitsap County Draft Sign Code over two work studies: May 6 and May 20.

On-going electronic notification of important Sign Code update information occurs via Kitsap County's “GovDelivery” electronic notification system. The Sign Code update list currently has approximately 100 subscribers, and interested parties continue to be added to the subscriber list upon request.

Sign Code Historic Context

The existing Kitsap County Sign Code was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1998 and has not been updated since that time. In the advent of new technologies, economic development strategies, and a desire for the perpetuation of high quality aesthetics within Kitsap County an update to the Sign Code is proposed. Less discretionary approval by way of more prescriptive measures is one of the modifications requested by the Kitsap County business community. The prescriptive measures are also proposed to minimize the proliferation of unwanted sign types and clutter.

Summary of 2014 Sign Code Update Components

The 2014 Sign Code update is a comprehensive repeal of the existing Sign Code, Section 17.445 KCC and proposed replacement with a new Sign Code section in Kitsap County Code Title 17. Key elements of the Sign Code include a directive in the purpose statement to establish “sign regulations, which support and complement land use objectives set forth in the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan, because unregulated signs may constitute a public nuisance for the health, safety, convenience, aesthetics, and welfare of Kitsap County residents.”

Below is a summary of key Sign Code update issues as identified through preliminary public feedback and subsequent the Planning Commission work studies:

- Preservation of Kitsap County Visual Quality
- Enforcement
- Electronic signage
- Non-Conforming signs and amortization
- Real estate signage
- Political signage
- Permitting
- Special event signage
Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission hold public hearings and make findings and conclusions to staff with regard to the Kitsap County Draft Sign Code update, together with such comments and recommendations as the Planning Commission deems necessary.