

October 2, 2002

**Honorable Mayor and Members of the
Hermosa Beach City Council**

**Regular Meeting of
November 12, 2002**

SUBJECT: DRAFT TEXT AMENDMENT AMENDING SECTION 17.50.080 AND 17.50.040 OF
THE SIGN ORDINANCE AND CHAPTER 12.16 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE TO
ALLOW SIDEWALK SIGNS

Recommendation:

To direct staff as deemed appropriate

Background

The Planning Commission previously reviewed the matter of permitting sidewalk signs based upon a request from one local merchant who complained that he had been required to remove a sign from the sidewalk as it violated the subject provisions of the Municipal Code. The Commission directed staff to return with a draft text amendment to allow sidewalk signs and further directed staff to notify all businesses in the City prior to considering the matter. The draft text amendment was approved on November 20, 2001 and the matter was to be referred to the Public Works Commission relative to encroachments on the public right-of-way. Subsequently the City Council requested that the matter be referred to City Council for disposition.

Analysis

Several Zone Code and Municipal Code changes are necessary to remove the prohibition and permit the placement of signs on public sidewalks. Both the sign ordinance in the Zone Code and most of Chapter 12.16 of the Municipal Code must be amended pertaining to commercial encroachments. New detailed standards are proposed under the draft text amendment with respect to type, size, placement (or content and colors) that require additional staff resources to administer and enforce effectively. From an administrative and enforcement perspective, it is more advantageous to either retain the prohibition, or if sidewalk signs are permitted, to allow the signs without permits and without extensive regulations which can be achieved by simply specifying one type of permissible sign.

The Commission considered that the sign ordinance currently allows several types of pedestrian oriented signs that can be displayed permanently or on a temporary basis as follows:

- **Projecting Signs** - for business identification in the downtown district, these can project over the sidewalk three feet from the building face with an 8-foot clearance below.
- **Window Signs** – these do not require a permit if less than 10 square feet and can cover up to 20% of the window.
- **Temporary Banner Signs** – up to 90 days in the calendar year
- **Wall Signs**
- **Awning Signs**
- **Monument Signs**
- **Pole Signs** (in the C-3 Zone)

Staff noted that with these opportunities for placement of pedestrian oriented signs, the addition of portable or sidewalk signs was unnecessary and would lead to visual clutter and a proliferation of obstacles along city sidewalks. Staff also noted that pedestrian orientation in the downtown does not occur along other commercial corridors in the City and there are aesthetic and safety impacts on Pacific Coast Highway and Aviation Boulevard that should be considered prior to approving the proposed change. These concerns include safety and liability issues relative to pedestrians and increased potential for traffic accidents due to reduced visual obstructions created by sidewalk signs.

Discussion of Sidewalk Sign Location

The Commission considered the location of such signs against store-fronts and along the curb and felt that sign location closer to the street would make them more visible to traffic, but that the signs would be competing with posted traffic and parking signs, power poles, street trees and other obstructions, limiting their visibility. Signs located closer to the building would eliminate the conflict with other public signage but reduce visibility along the street. Staff noted that if the location for the sign is adjacent to the store-front in order to maintain pedestrian clearance, it is no different than a window sign or projecting sign already permitted in the downtown.

Sol Blumenfeld, Director
Community Development

Concur:

Stephen R. Burrell,
City Manager

Attachments

1. Suggested Text Amendment Changes to the Municipal Code.

sidewalksignsTA