



## CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Date:** April 21, 2011  
**To:** Honorable Mayor & City Council  
**From:** Jonathan Lait, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development  
**Subject:** Temporary Business Signs Related to Construction Activity  
**Attachments:** None

---

### INTRODUCTION

Mayor Brucker requested the subject item be placed on the Study Session agenda. This report provides the basis for a policy discussion and possible direction to staff to prepare an ordinance that would allow for the temporary placement of business signs on buildings that are undergoing construction.

### DISCUSSION

Most signs established in the city require review by the Architectural Commission. The sign code does provide that temporary signs can be approved administratively, but these signs have strict requirements, including:

- Can only be placed within a window facing a street
- Limits letter height to 12 inches
- Signs limited to 25% of the window area
- The aggregate sign area of all temporary signs cannot exceed 25% of the total permitted sign area for the business (2 x Street Frontage x .25)
- Limits signs to business name, logo, and text related to opening date, or similar text
- Temporary signs may be installed for no more than 30 days within a 180 day period

Business owners have in the past and continue to express concern and frustration regarding the limitations set forth in the sign code and their ability to advertise future store openings in buildings that are being renovated. Temporary signs can be used to create interest and excitement about future businesses and provide a creative alternative to showcase new stores. Signs can also be used to screen potentially unsightly construction-related work occurring within buildings.

Meeting Date: April 21, 2011

Temporary sign requests typically do not comply with the standards identified above, which can stifle creative marketing. Additionally, sending temporary signs to the Architectural Commission for a modification to the standard puts business owners through a process that can take on average two months to complete and cost several thousand dollars. Moreover, the signs themselves are temporary and would not have a lasting impact on the neighborhood character.

One of the purposes of this discussion item is to gauge City Council interest in the possibility of introducing greater flexibility into the sign code to allow temporary signs for businesses that are renovating a storefront.

To implement this flexibility, an amendment to the sign code would be required, which would be processed first through the Planning Commission and then to the City Council. The City Council may also consider whether the amendments should first be presented to the Architectural Commission for comment before proceeding to the Planning Commission. However, since the temporary signs are currently not subject to Architectural Review, staff recommends the amendment proceed directly to the Planning Commission to reduce processing time and, therefore, more quickly benefit businesses that might take advantage of these new standards.

It is anticipated that an amendment would include the following:

- An administrative procedure to permit temporary business signs during construction
- Definitions of qualifying 'temporary signs' and 'construction'
- Increased flexibility to the number and placement of temporary signs on a building
- Increased flexibility to promote creative and tasteful temporary signs
- Low application fees to process the request, but perhaps a performance bond to ensure signs remain temporary in nature

If there is support to make changes to the sign code to permit temporary signs, it is recommended the City Council consider the points above, specify whether Architectural Commission input is desired and direct staff to prepare an ordinance.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The recommendation in this report does not have any significant fiscal or budget impacts, however, direction to proceed may impact progress made on department work plan items that have been adopted as part of the budget and amended from time to time by the City Council.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that that City Council discuss possible amendments to the sign code and, as appropriate, direct staff to begin processing a text amendment to permit temporary construction signs.

Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director

Approved By

