

July 28, 2014

#### Title

PC 14-20

#### Petitioner

Village of Lombard  
255 E. Wilson  
Lombard IL 60148

#### Property Location

Village-wide

#### Approval Sought

Text amendments to the Sign Ordinance (Section 153 of the Code of Ordinances) pertaining to the permissible locations and maximum sign area for automatic changeable copy (ACC) signs

#### Submittals

1. Petition for a public hearing;
2. Workshop memo; and
3. Standards for Text Amendment.

#### Prepared By

Jennifer Ganser  
Assistant Director

#### DESCRIPTION

The petitioner, the Village of Lombard, requests a text amendment to the Sign Ordinance (Section 153 of the Code of Ordinances) pertaining to the permissible locations and maximum sign area for automatic changeable copy (ACC) signs.

Potential text amendments were brought forth as a workshop session at the May and June 2014 Plan Commission meetings. Numerous requests for ACC signage have been brought forth to staff and therefore staff feels it is appropriate to further amend the Sign Ordinance. The Plan Commission recently reviewed requests at Yorktown Mall, Lombard Pines Shopping Center, First United Methodist Church, and Glenbard East High School.

#### Location

The Village's Sign Ordinance currently only permits ACC signs on properties within the CR, B3, B4A, B5, and B5A zoning district. A change to corridor-based ACC regulations would allow additional sites, including office, industrial, institutional, and education uses which currently have an O, I, or R zoning classification. Based on the research staff did for the workshops, Oakbrook Terrace and Wheaton regulate ACC signage by corridor. Below are definitions from the 2014 Comprehensive Plan update of major and minor arterial roadways in Lombard.

*Major Arterial: Major arterials are intended to serve all types of trips, with a significant portion representing trips destined beyond the boundaries of the community and neighboring communities. The Major arterial typically serves a significant number of trips generated within the community; however, access is carefully controlled. This type of street has regional importance because of its alignment, continuity, capacity and connections with other regional traffic carriers.*

*Minor Arterial: A Minor arterial is intended to serve all types of trips with more emphasis on trips within and between the community and areas adjacent the community. The range of traffic volumes that can be expected on Minor arterial streets will vary significantly depending on the density of development, spacing of regional routes, and the continuity of the street.*

### Minimum Frontage Requirement

A complete elimination of a frontage requirement could lead to visual clutter, especially in areas like the B5 and B5A districts due to their generally narrower street frontages. In the workshop session, the Plna Commission recommended that the minimum frontage requirement could be reduced to 300 feet but only when such frontage is along a Major or Minor arterial road.

### Size

Currently automatic changeable copy cannot be more than nine (9) square feet in size and a deviation of increased size would require a public hearing and Village Board of Trustees approval. The nine (9) square feet requirement was based upon a previous petition to provide for ACC signage for gas stations and like uses. However, as this signage became more popular and affordable staff has seen an increase in requests for a larger ACC sign, such as Yorktown Mall, Lombard Pines Shopping Center, First United Methodist Church, and Glenbard East High School, which all were approved by the Village Board of Trustees.

## INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW

### **Building Division:**

The Building Division has no comments regarding the proposed text amendments.

### **Fire Department:**

The Fire Department has no issues or concerns regarding the proposed text amendments to the Sign Ordinance.

### **Private Engineering Services:**

Private Engineering Services has no comments regarding the proposed text amendments.

### **Public Works:**

The Department of Public Works has no comments regarding the proposed text amendments.

### **Planning Services Division:**

Staff proposes the following text amendments in **bold and underline**. Deletions are denoted by a ~~strikethrough~~.

## EXISTING & PROPOSED REGULATIONS

### **§ 153.210 Automatic changeable copy.**

Automatic changeable copy signs are allowable as a component of a wall or freestanding sign and shall be included in the total area of the sign. Automatic changeable copy signs are allowable ~~only in the CR, B3, B4A, B5 and B5A zoning districts~~ on **non-residential** property **that fronts a designated Major or Minor arterial road** with a minimum of ~~500~~ **300** lineal front footage in accordance with the following provisions:

- (A) Allowed only when all of the signs on the site are in total compliance with the Sign Ordinance.
- (B) The sign surface area of the changeable copy sign shall be counted in the overall surface area of the freestanding sign.
- (C) The sign shall be permitted to change no more frequently than two-second intervals and shall be limited to changeable messages and not chasing messages.

(D) The use of animation, flashing, scrolling or blinking characters is prohibited.

(E) No automatic changeable reader boards shall exceed ~~nine~~ **sixteen** square feet in area.

(F) The changeable message reader board shall be equipped with photosensitive equipment which automatically adjusts the brightness and contrast of the sign in direct relation to the ambient outdoor illumination.

**(G) The 300 lineal front footage must be abutting a designated Major or Minor arterial road.**

**(H) The sign face shall be located perpendicular to the Major or Minor arterial road.**

### **STANDARDS FOR TEXT AMENDMENTS**

For any change to the Zoning Ordinance, the standards for text amendments must be affirmed. The standards and staff comments are noted below:

1. *The degree to which the proposed amendment has general applicability within the Village at large and not intended to benefit specific property;*  
The text amendment is generally applicable to all properties in the Village. The amendment changes the way the Village will regulate where ACC are permitted by only permitting them on Major or Minor arterial roadways with a 300 foot frontage on said Major or Minor arterial roadways.
2. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the objectives of this ordinance and the intent of the applicable zoning district regulations;*  
The proposed text amendments still allows for ACC signs and now expands upon what zones ACC signs would be allowed.
3. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would create nonconformity;*  
The proposed text amendment is additive in nature and does not create any known nonconformities.
4. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would make this ordinance more permissive;*  
The proposed amendment is more permissive to the extent that it could allow for additional ACC signage. The amendment changes the way the Village will regulate where ACC are permitted by only permitting them on Major or Minor arterial roadways with a 300 foot frontage on said Major or Minor arterial roadways.
5. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan; and*  
Staff finds that the proposed amendments would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan does not address ACC signage specifically but does call a desire to address emerging technologies.
6. *The degree to which the proposed amendment is consistent with village policy as established in previous rulings on petitions involving similar circumstances.*

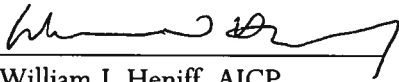
The Village has a history of amending its Sign Ordinance to address evolving technologies and by recognizes a desire to amend the code to address regulations. The proposed amendments are consistent with established Village policy in this regard.

## **FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above findings, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee has reviewed the petition and finds that it meets the standards required by the Zoning Ordinance. As such, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee recommends that the Plan Commission make the following motion recommending **approval** of this petition:

Based on the submitted petition and the testimony presented, the requested text amendments **comply** with the standards required by the Village of Lombard Zoning Ordinance; and, therefore, I move that the Plan Commission accept the findings and recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Report as the findings of the Plan Commission and I recommend to the Corporate Authorities **approval** of PC 14-20.

Inter-Departmental Review Committee Report approved by:



William J. Heniff, AICP  
Director of Community Development


c. Petitioner

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** LOMBARD PLAN COMMISSION  
Donald Ryan, Plan Commission Chairperson

**FROM:** Jennifer Ganser, Assistant Director of Community Development 

**DATE:** June 16, 2014

**SUBJECT: Automatic Changeable Copy Signage – Workshop Continued**

At the May 19<sup>th</sup> Plan Commission meeting, staff led a workshop on automatic changeable copy (ACC) signage and it was continued to the June 16, 2014 Plan Commission meeting. Below is an updated memo for discussion.

Last summer staff led a workshop on automatic changeable copy (ACC) signage. Since then numerous requests for ACC signage have been brought forth to staff and therefore staff feels it is appropriate to discuss the matter again as a workshop session. Staff has received inquiries from Glenbard East High School (PC 14-14), National University of Health Sciences, and a couple of religious institutions located in the R – Residential Districts. The Plan Commission also reviewed the ACC sign at First United Methodist Church on October 21, 2013 (PC 13-17). Furthermore the Village has also considered an ACC sign at Main Street and Wilson Avenue to replace the temporary signage for community events.

The Plan Commission continued this matter to further review ACC sign regulations. If the Plan Commission concurs, a text amendment could be brought forward at a future Plan Commission meeting.

### **Existing regulations on ACC signage:**

- Allowed only within the CR, B3, B4A, B5, and B5A zoning districts;
- Site must have at least 500 combined lineal foot frontage;
- Automatic changeable copy counts toward the total allowable sign area and cannot be more than nine (9) square feet in area;
- Sign cannot change more than once every two seconds;
- No animation, blinking, chasing, flashing, or scrolling of characters is allowed; and
- Automatic brightness and contrast control is required.

### **Zoning District versus Street Type Designation**

The Village's Sign Ordinance currently only permits ACC signs on properties within the CR, B3, B4A, B5, and B5A zoning district.

An addition of corridor-based ACC regulations will make eligible a multitude of sites, including office, industrial, and education uses which currently have an O, I, or R zoning classification. Also, several multi-family residential buildings/complexes would be eligible for an ACC sign.

Staff recommends consideration of further amending the regulations to allow for ACC signs on major and minor arterial roadways. Based on the research staff did for the previous workshop, Oakbrook Terrace and Wheaton regulate ACC signage by corridor. Below are definitions from the 2014 Comprehensive Plan update and attached is a map showing the major and minor arterial roadways in Lombard.

#### Major Arterial

*Major arterials are intended to serve all types of trips, with a significant portion representing trips destined beyond the boundaries of the community and neighboring communities. The Major arterial typically serves a significant number of trips generated within the community; however, access is carefully controlled. This type of street has regional importance because of its alignment, continuity, capacity and connections with other regional traffic carriers.*

#### Minor Arterial

*A Minor arterial is intended to serve all types of trips with more emphasis on trips within and between the community and areas adjacent the community. The range of traffic volumes that can be expected on Minor arterial streets will vary significantly depending on the density of development, spacing of regional routes, and the continuity of the street.*

Staff feels this is an appropriate change since these roads typically have higher traffic volumes and higher traffic speeds. This makes it difficult to slow down or pull off and stop to read a temporary sign. Also, businesses on these roads compete with other business on major and minor arterial roadways.

During discussions at the May 2014 Plan Commission, the Commissioners found that the proposed regulations could allow for ACC signage in more residential districts. The Plan Commission raised concerns since not every minor arterial road, such as Main Street and Westmore-Meyers Road, has a high rate of speed.

#### **Frontage Requirement**

If the Zoning Ordinance were to also include corridor-based (using major and minor arterial roads) ACC regulations, the question exists if the five-hundred foot (500') frontage requirement should be maintained, reduced, or disregarded altogether. Based on staff's research, a complete elimination of such frontage requirements could lead to visual clutter, especially in areas like the B5 and B5A districts due to their generally narrower street frontages.

Staff recommends that the 500' frontage requirement be maintained. Please note that for corner lots, frontage length applies to a site's cumulative frontage.

The Plan Commission agreed on their preference to maintain the 500' frontage requirement. The Plan Commission asked if the frontage was counted per business or, in the example of a strip mall, as a whole. Staff responded that the frontage is counted per lot, and only one freestanding sign would be allowed. It was discussed that a corner lot could have an unfair advantage since two frontages would be counted. The Plan Commission discussed if both frontages should be counted, only one frontage, or only if the frontage is on a major or minor arterial. Businesses could request variances through the Plan Commission. Staff brought up that corner lots do

receive a signage advantage in wall signs (a corner lot would be allowed two wall signs) in zoning districts that wall signs are allowed.

### **Size**

Currently automatic changeable copy cannot be more than nine (9) square feet in size and a deviation of increased size would require a public hearing and Village Board of Trustees approval. As this signage becomes more popular and affordable there may be an increase in requests for a larger sign. For example, First United Methodist Church petitioned for a thirteen (13) square foot size, which was approved by the Village Board of Trustees.

If there is support for the addition of ACC signage on major and minor arterials roadways, staff can bring forward new regulations on size relative to the nature of the street.

The Plan Commission agreed a modest increase may be acceptable, but they still would be interested in reviewing the petitions, especially those on a minor arterial street or a more residential area. Based on the memo from the summer 2013 workshop, size of ACC signage varies among municipalities. Glen Ellyn allows ACC signs up to eighteen (18) square feet, while others like Addison, Westmont, Wheaton, Villa Park and Carol Stream allow ACC as a percent of the total sign size.

### **Additional Regulations**

Staff proposes no changes to the following regulations:

- Sign cannot change more than once every two seconds;
- No animation, blinking, chasing, flashing, or scrolling of characters is allowed; and
- Automatic brightness and contrast control is required.

The Plan Commission agreed with staff that no changes are needed.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

Staff is bringing this item to the Plan Commission for further discussion. Should the Plan Commission wish to amend the existing regulation regarding ACC signs, a text amendment will be brought forward at a future Plan Commission meeting.