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Agenda Date: 5/4/2011  
Agenda Placement: 9A

## Napa County Planning Commission Board Agenda Letter

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**TO:** Napa County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** John McDowell for Hillary Gitelman - Director  
Conservation, Development & Planning  
**REPORT BY:** JESSICA JORDAN, SUPERVISING PLANNER - 299-1355  
**SUBJECT:** Hospital Sign Zoning Ordinance Amendment P11-00069-ORD

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **HOSPITAL SIGN ZONING ORDINANCE, PROPERTY OWNER-INITIATED ZONING CODE TEXT AMANDMENT P11-00069-ORD**

**CEQA Status:** The proposed amendments are exempt from CEQA review under the "General Rule" Section 15061 (b)(3) that CEQA only applies to projects that "have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment". The proposed Zoning Code Amendments are limited to allowing off-site signs for hospital uses through the established administrative permit process. The amendments are regulatory in nature, do not identify any specific location for installation of such signs, and are not approving any specific development request.

**Request:** First reading and recommendation of adoption of an ordinance amending Sections 18.116.030, 18.116.065, and 18.126.060 of the Zoning Code to permit the installation of off-site signs to identify a hospital in the unincorporated areas of Napa County. The proposed Code Amendments would require an administrative permit issued by the director for any proposed off-site sign and would include physical limitations of said signs.

**Ordinance Title:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NAPA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AMENDING SECTIONS 18.116.030 AND 18.116.065 OF CHAPTER 18.116 AND SECTION 18.126.060 OF CHAPTER 18.126 OF TITLE 18 OF THE NAPA COUNTY CODE REGULATING SIGNS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERMITS.

**Staff Recommendation:** That the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing and recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt the proposed Ordinance.

**Staff Contact:** Jessica Jordan, (707) 299-1355, [Jessica.Jordan@countyofnapa.org](mailto:Jessica.Jordan@countyofnapa.org)

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Proposed Action:**

That the Planning Commission:

1. Recommends Board of Supervisors adoption of the proposed ordinance, finding that the proposed ordinance is consistent with the Napa County General Plan, and does not result in internal inconsistencies within Napa County zoning regulations.

**Discussion:**

The proposed ordinance was initiated at the request of the St. Helena Hospital for the purposes of allowing off-site signs to identify the hospital's location. The proposed ordinance would amend specific sections within Chapter 18.116, Signs, and Chapter 18.126, Administrative Permits of Title 18 of the Napa County Code. These new regulations would apply to any property within the unincorporated County and are specifically designed for hospitals with emergency rooms. Currently, St. Helena Hospital is the only such facility within the unincorporated County. The regulations have been written to address the applicant's proposed needs but, also to protect the County's interests should another hospital with emergency room facilities establish itself in some unknown future circumstance.

The proposed ordinance establishes specific circumstances for allowing such off-site signs and utilizes the existing administrative permit process as a means to review any specific proposal in the future. No specific locations or proposals for off-site sign installations are being considered at this time. As proposed, the new and amended regulations would allow up to four off-site signs, either on private property or within County right-of-way, at a limited height and square footage. Environmentally sensitive areas are deemed inappropriate for such signs. The proposed ordinance, setting forth the proposed amendments, is attached for the Commission's review and reference.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact?                      No

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

The proposed amendments are exempt from CEQA review under the "General Rule" Section 15061(b)(3) that CEQA only applies to projects that "have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment". The proposed Zoning Code Amendments are limited to allowing off-site signs for hospital uses through the established administrative permit process. The amendments are regulatory in nature, do not identify any specific location for installation of such signs, and are not approving any specific development request. As proposed, the regulations eliminate any environmentally sensitive location for consideration for any future action that relies on the proposed standards.

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION****Proposed Hospital Signs Ordinance**

**Property Affected:** Applies to all properties of any zone within unincorporated Napa County

**Discussion:**Existing Regulations

Title 18 (Zoning) of the Napa County Code does not currently allow permanent off-site signs for any use type. Section 18.116.041 provides regulations for Temporary off-site signs, limiting such signs to seasonal agricultural retail sales activities such as the annual sale of Christmas trees. Signage specific to the St. Helena Hospital is currently regulated by an adopted Comprehensive Sign Program and allows for on-site signage only.

Proposed Ordinance

The purpose and intent of the ordinance is to provide a uniform and comprehensive set of standards for installation of off-site signs for hospital uses with emergency services only. The proposed zoning code text amendments limit the installation of off-site signs to hospital uses with emergency services only and limit the overall number and size of such signs. Additionally, regulations regarding lighting, height, and sign location as well as requirements for encroachment permits as applicable are included in the proposed ordinance. The ordinance relies on the existing Administrative Permit process to allow staff review and approval of these signs.

General Plan and Zoning Consistency

California law requires local jurisdictions to maintain consistency between their general plan and zoning. These proposed amendments have been reviewed and determined to not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or adopted zoning regulation. The proposed text amendments advance the following goals and policies of the Napa County General Plan:

*Policy AG/LU-76:* The County supports the continued operation of the St. Helena Hospital and recognizes the importance of the hospital's role in providing in- and out-patient services and employment for Napa County residents.

*Policy CIR-22:* While the design of roadways shall be based on meeting local needs, the County shall also seek to meet the specific needs of senior citizens and tourist drivers, such as signage and intersections, to make driving for all users safer and easier.

*Policy CC-3:* Signs shall be used primarily to provide necessary information and business identification rather than the advertisement of goods and services. Sign size limits and locational requirements shall be established to avoid over-proliferation of signs. Although the sign size may be limited, lettering should be large and easy to read.

Conclusion

The proposed ordinance recognizes the needs of the existing St. Helena Hospital regarding off-site identification for visitors and persons in need of hospital services. The text amendments are intended to allow off-site signage while still limiting the total number and size of said signs to protect the visual quality of the County. As described above, the proposed ordinance advances the County's General Plan policies that promote the continued operation of the St. Helena Hospital and making safe driving conditions for all users of the County's circulation system. The proposed ordinance establishes development standards and relies upon existing procedures to allow for identification signage for hospital uses only. The regulations include protection of environmental resources, eliminating any potential adverse environmental impacts.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

A . Proposed Ordinance

Napa County Planning Commission: Approve

Reviewed By: John McDowell