



**AGENDA**  
**RIO DELL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2025–6:00 P.M.**  
**CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**675 WILDWOOD AVENUE, RIO DELL**

---

**WELCOME....** Copies of this agenda, staff reports, and other materials available to the Commission are available at the City Clerk's office in City Hall, 675 Wildwood Avenue, and on the City's website at [www.cityofriodell.ca.gov](http://www.cityofriodell.ca.gov). Your City Government welcomes your interest and hopes you will attend and participate in Rio Dell Planning Commission meetings often.

City Council and Planning Commission meetings held in City Hall Council Chambers are open to in-person attendance by the public.

**Public Comment by Email:**

In balancing the health risks associated with COVID-19 and the need to conduct government openly and transparently, public comments on agenda items can be submitted via email at [publiccomment@cityofriodell.ca.gov](mailto:publiccomment@cityofriodell.ca.gov). Please note which item the comment is directed to, and email your comments to the above email address. Written comments will be submitted to the Commissioners and included in the minutes as part of the public record.

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

D. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

E. CONSENT CALENDAR

1) 2025/1125.01 - Approve Minutes of the September 9, 2025 Special Meeting  
**(ACTION) Pg. 1**

F. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

*This time is for persons who wish to address the Commission on any matter not on this agenda and over which the Commission has jurisdiction. As such, a dialogue with the Commission or staff is not allowed under the Ralph M. Brown Act. Items requiring Commission action not listed on this agenda may be placed on the next regular agenda for consideration if the Commission directs, unless at least 2/3 of the Commission make a finding that the item came up after the agenda was posted and is urgent, requiring immediate action.*

**Written public comment must be submitted via email no later than 1 hour before the meeting at [publiccomment@cityofriodell.ca.gov](mailto:publiccomment@cityofriodell.ca.gov). Your comments will be read out loud for up to three minutes.**

#### G. SCHEDULED MATTERS/PUBLIC HEARINGS/STUDY SESSIONS

- 1) 2025/1125.02 - Adopt Resolution No. PC 189-2025 Recommending the City Council Approve Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Regarding Freeway-Oriented Billboards, Establish a Definition and Use Type for Community Oriented Billboards, and Rezone Portion of the Wastewater Disposal Field Parcel **(ACTION) Pg. 4**

#### H. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS/UPDATES

#### I. ADJOURNMENT



*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at (707) 764-3532. Notification 48 hours before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting. Assistive listening devices are now available for the hearing-impaired. Please see the City Clerk for a receiver.*

***The next Regular Planning Commission meeting is  
scheduled for December 23, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.***

**RIO DELL PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Knight called the special meeting of the Rio Dell Planning Commission to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present were Commissioners Knight, Arsenault, and Millington. Absent were Commissioners Angeloff and Gurney (excused).

Others present were Community Development Director Caldwell, City Manager Knopp, and City Clerk Dunham.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Approve Minutes of August 26, 2025, Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Millington/Arsenault to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2025, regular meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

Commissioner Knight called for public comment on any matter not on the agenda. No public comment was received.

**SCHEDULED MATTERS/PUBLIC HEARINGS/STUDY SESSIONS**

Adopt Resolution No. PC 188-2025 Recommending that the City Council Approve the Amended Safety Element to Incorporate the County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)

Community Development Director Caldwell provided a staff report and explained that the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) must be updated by the County every five (5) years to maintain eligibility for FEMA funding and to help guide policies and projects that reduce the impact of natural disasters. He said that Rio Dell, along with seven (7) other cities, the county of Humboldt and 15 special districts participated in the 2025 multi-jurisdiction LHMP for Humboldt County. He explained that the districts all have what is called an Annex that specifically spells out their responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

He said that the big issue is that by adopting the LHMP and incorporating it by reference into the City's Safety Element, the City would qualify to receive disaster funding at both the State and Federal level.

**RIO DELL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 MINUTES**  
**Page 2**

He noted that the plan objectives include:

- Risk Assessment: Identify natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities
- Mitigation Strategies: Develop long-term strategies to protect people and property
- Implementation: Formulate plans to put mitigation strategies into action

He said that the changes to the plan are minor and referred to the revised language on page 21 of the packet which stated that the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have determined the Hazard Mitigation Plan is eligible for approval pending adoption by participating jurisdictions, including a link to Volume 1 of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Volume 2 which included Rio Dell's Annex.

Commissioner Millington asked for clarification that FEMA did not contribute to the 2022 Rio Dell Earthquake disaster.

Community Development Director Caldwell explained that economically disadvantaged communities such as Rio Dell typically get penalized during natural disasters because they can't meet the threshold to qualify for FEMA funding because the cost of housing per unit here is not the same as some of the more prosperous cities. In addition, the city only receives 75% reimbursement at the State level.

City Manager Knopp explained that the federal threshold is one issue and the Hazard Mitigation Plan adds two things for Rio Dell on a practical level. One is accessing federal funding through FEMA grant funding and the state funding which an important part of the plan. He said that it allows the city to become AB 2140 compliant so once adopted and incorporated into the City's Safety Element, the City can apply to the State for earthquake reimbursements that go beyond the 75% state threshold level, to potentially 100%. He stressed the importance of moving this forward because none of the jurisdictions in Humboldt County are currently AB 2140 compliant.

He said that the value-added benefit is that over time the threats posed to the community are being examined including the extreme wildfire situation.

Commissioner Millington mentioned the California Brace and Bolt Program and said that she was under the impression that part of those funds were through FEMA. She asked if the damages were assessed throughout California or just Rio Dell to meet the threshold for FEMA funding.



**RIO DELL PLANNING COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 MINUTES  
Page 3**

City Manager Knopp explained that the determination is made by Cal OES and historically they have tried to group as many of the associated costs together. He commented that around 2010, there was an earthquake in Crescent City that damaged the harbor there and that only became federally declared because the same tsunami damaged some of the harbor equipment in Santa Cruz. By lumping those damages together, they were able to meet the required threshold and both communities then received assistance.

He said in summary, adoption of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) allows for planning and making jurisdiction aware of the threats and eligible for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding. If compliant with AB 2140, the City is eligible, (but not guaranteed) for 100% reimbursement rather than 75% for city damaged infrastructure.

Community Development Director Caldwell further explained that the idea behind the Safety Element and the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is to define risks and to have policies or mitigation measures to avoid those risks.

A motion was made by Arsenault/Millington Knight to adopt Resolution No. PC 188-2025 *Recommending that the City Council Approve the Amended Safety Element to Incorporate the County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)*. The motion carried 3-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. to the September 23, 2025, regular meeting.

---

Patrick Knight, Vice-Chair

Attest:

---

Karen Dunham, City Clerk



Community Development Department  
675 Wildwood Avenue  
Rio Dell, CA 95562  
(707) 764-3532

**For the Meeting of November 25, 2025**

☐ Consent Item; ☒ Discussion Item

To: Planning Commission

From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "K" followed by a stylized "C".

Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

Date: October 30, 2025

Subject: Billboards

---

---

**Recommendation:**

That the Planning Commission:

1. Receive a brief staff report regarding billboard past discussions, text amendments to the sign regulations and a map amendment (zone reclassification) of about 3,000 square feet from Public Facility (PF) to Industrial Commercial with a Qualified combining zone (IC-Q) restricting allowed uses to billboards; and
2. Open the public hearing, receive public input, close the public hearing and deliberate; and
3. Adopt Resolution No. 189-2025 recommending that the City Council approve the proposed text amendments to the sign regulations and a map amendment (zone reclassification) of about 3,000 square feet from Public Facility (PF) to Industrial Commercial with a Qualified combining zone (IC-Q) restricting allowed uses to billboards.

## Summary

At the direction of the City Council, staff is presenting options to (1) facilitate a third billboard on the east side of Highway 101 within the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP); (2) establish a definition and use type for community-oriented billboards; and (3) rezone a portion of the City's wastewater disposal field in the west side of Highway 101 to facilitate a total of three billboards, including a community-oriented billboard for use by the Chamber of Commerce.

## Background

At the Council meeting of October 7, 2025 Wally Coppini, representing the Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Council asking that the Council agendaize a discussion on billboards, in particular billboards promoting the City and its businesses. These types of billboards are typically considered "Community Oriented" billboards

At the Council meeting of October 21, 2025 staff presented background on the current billboard regulations, including zones allowing billboards, location, number and size standards.

It should be noted that in January 2022 the Council discussed three possible sites for billboards over at the City wastewater disposal field. The primary intent was to generate revenue and promote the City's image and community events. Council directed staff to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP's) for up to three signs which would be constructed, operated and maintained by a third party. Staff prepared the RFP and solicited proposals. No proposals were received.

During the discussion at the October 21<sup>st</sup> City Council meeting, staff pointed out that in addition to limiting the placement of billboards to the east side of Highway 101, the current regulations require a **½ mile between** each billboard and a maximum of three billboards. The required

separation distance eliminates the potential for a third billboard. **Attachment 1** identifies the location of the two existing signs, one at the south entrance to the HRDP and one at the north entrance.

### **Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park**

In order to allow a third billboard on the east side of Highway 101 within the HRDBP, staff is recommending amending the separation distance from ½ mile to 1000 feet. Caltrans, which administers the State's Outdoor Advertising Act (OAA) requires a minimum separation of 100 feet in City limits. The OAA requires that billboards in the unincorporated areas be at least 300 feet apart.

It should be noted that one of the property owners attended the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and advocated amending the sign regulations too facilitate the third billboard. The property owner initially reached out to the City near the end of 2021 encouraging the City to consider amending the sign regulations to facilitate a billboard on one of his two parcels at the HRDBP.

### **City's Wastewater Disposal Field**

As indicated above, the City's current sign regulations limits billboards (Freeway Oriented Signs) to the HRDBP. Of course, in order to promote the City and its events and businesses, it makes sense to allow allowing billboards/signs across the freeway on the City's Wastewater Disposal parcel, visible to southbound traffic. The OAA only allows billboards on lands zoned industrial or commercial. As such, in order to allow billboards on the west side of Highway 101 on the property of the City's wastewater disposal field, the City would need to amend the sign regulations and rezone the areas for the signs to Industrial Commercial (IC).



Because the Industrial Commercial zone allows a wide variety of uses, staff is recommending establishing a Qualified (Q) Combining Zone. In this case the Q Combining Zone would limit future uses on the City's wastewater disposal parcel to billboards.

Figure 1 identifies possible locations. The middle location is near an existing power pole, an electrical source for a potential digital LED sign.



**Figure 1**

**Zone Reclassification Required Finding:**

- 1. The proposed amendment is consistent and compatible with the General Plan and any implementation programs that may be affected.**

The General Plan contains a number of policies that encourage economic development facilitating the goal “To grow sustainably, provide economic opportunities and local jobs.”

Some of the key economic development policies are identified below:

- Policy P1.3.2-1: “Encourage the creation and retention of employment opportunities that provide sustainable wages and benefits for Rio Dell residents by promoting a thriving local retail, personal services, and commercial sector.”
- Policy P1.3.2-2: “Encourage the use of public/private partnerships as a means of redeveloping and revitalizing selected areas ... and analyze the use of such techniques as business improvement districts, redevelopment areas, and assessment districts.”
- Policy P1.3.2-3: “Provide sufficient land for business expansion and attraction of new employers by designating a mixed-use corridor along Wildwood Avenue and in the Town Center.”

Rio Dell sits along Highway 101 — the main travel corridor between the Bay Area and the Oregon border, with limited commercial frontage visible from the highway. Currently, there are **very, few if any, billboards** serving local businesses, meaning travelers often pass by without realizing what’s available in town (food, fuel, lodging, etc.). Southbound oriented billboards could offer local businesses the opportunity to advertise directly to thousands of drivers daily, increasing awareness and potential customer stops. According to Caltrans the Annual Average Daily traffic is between 17,000 and 20,000 vehicles per day. It should be noted that the HRDBP property owner is planning to install a two-sided billboard facing both northbound and southbound traffic.

Amending the City’s current sign regulations to facilitate a third billboard on the east side of Highway 101 within the HRDBP and up to three billboards on the west side of Highway 101

on the City's wastewater disposal field property is consistent with the City's economic goals and policies by providing economic opportunities, promoting the City's local businesses.

In addition, a dedicated community-oriented billboard is a great example of a public-private partnership in promoting the City, its businesses and community events.

## **2. The proposed amendments have been processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).**

The proposed amendments were referred to a number of local and responsible agencies, including Caltrans, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the local Wiyot tribes. None of the agencies have expressed any concerns.

The tribes did request that protocols for inadvertent archaeological discoveries be implemented for any future ground-disturbing activities. This recommendation aligns Section 7050.5(b) of the California Health and Safety Code, Sections 5097.94(k) and (i), and 5097.98(a) and (b) of the Public Resources Code (PRC) and Sections 15064.5(d-f) and 15126.4(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. The City has been requiring that project proponents conducting ground disturbing activities execute the Inadvertent Discovery Protocol Affidavit included as **Attachment 2**.

Again, although there will be three small, 20' x 50', areas redesignated to Industrial Commercial (IC), staff is recommending establishing a Qualified (Q) Combining Zone. In this case the Q Combining Zone would limit future uses on the City's wastewater disposal parcel to billboards.

Large billboards, 12' x 40', 480 square feet typically utilize drilled pier (Caisson) steel-reinforced footings supporting a steel column or monopole. Footing for these larger billboards range 3.5 – 5 feet in diameter. The actual disturbed area is relatively small. The one parcel at the HRDBP

meeting the recommended minimum distance from another billboard is completely paved. As such, it is void of any environmentally sensitive habitat.

The areas on the west side of the highway on the City's wastewater disposal field property are used for growing hay. Given the small footprints of the potential billboards, the ground disturbance impacts will be insignificant. In addition, it is not expected that the footings will adversely impact the hay operations.

The installation of three billboards will impact the visual character of the area. The segment of Highway 101 north of the Eel River is *not a designated State Scenic Highway*, but is visually sensitive due to its open rural context. Potentially allowable structures include:

- Billboard A: up to 12 ft × 40 ft (480 sq ft), height ≤ 35 ft;
- Billboards B & C: up to 10 ft × 20 ft (200 sq ft) each, height ≤ 25 ft.

Each billboard would be mounted on a single steel monopole with concealed electrical service and low-intensity LED or downcast lighting (if illuminated).

The project area lies in the transition zone between the Eel River floodplain and the developed city limits of Rio Dell.

- **Visual character:** The area north of the Eel River Bridge consists of open grasslands with riparian vegetation along the banks of the river and limited built features. The highway embankment is slightly elevated, providing broad views of the surrounding valley and distant forested hills.
- **Existing signage:** Two existing billboards are already present near this segment of U.S. 101; they are visible to motorists traveling northbound and southbound.



- Viewer experience: The site on the west side of Highway 101 represents a gateway approach to the City, with the Eel River riparian vegetation, agricultural lands and distant forested hills providing a strong natural visual character. The site on the east side of Highway 101 is within the HRDBP and site just south of an existing 35' +/- tall two story building.

The visual sensitivity of the corridor looking westerly is considered moderate, as the area west of the Highway, with the exception of a few portable shed displays and a 4' x 8' "Quinoa" sign, provides open scenic views and is visible to both motorists and residents entering or leaving Rio Dell.

The visual sensitivity on the east side of highway 101 is considered less than moderate. This area is developed with a number of large industrial buildings, including an existing 35' +/- tall two story building immediately north of the site and a parcel selling and displaying a large number of portable sheds.

On the west side of Highway 101, the proposed 12'x40' billboard (Billboard A) would be the dominant feature among the three, but its height limitation of 35 feet ensures it remains lower than typical full-size highway signs (often 45–55 ft). The two smaller 10'x20' billboards (Billboards B & C), each limited to 25 ft high, would have a substantially smaller mass and lower profile, reducing skyline intrusion.

When viewed together, the three structures would introduce vertical elements into an otherwise open landscape. However, the **variation in height and size** would reduce the visual uniformity that often causes "sign clutter." The smaller boards visually balance the larger one due to the recommended spacing (e.g.,  $\geq 400\text{--}500$  ft apart).

LED billboards are currently allowed in the Industrial Commercial (IC) zone. However, staff is recommending codifying a number of performance standards to minimize potential visual impacts, including:

- A copy of the approved Outdoor Advertising Act (OAA) permit shall be provided with the Building Permit application.
- Spacing billboards at least 400 feet apart on the west side of Highway 101.
- Limit billboards height to 35 feet on the east side of Highway 101 within the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park and 25 feet on the west side of Highway 101.
- Non-reflective, earth-tone finishes are required on poles and rear panels.
- Lighting for non-LED signs shall be downward-directed.
- LED signs shall have automatic brightness controls limiting nighttime brightness to a maximum 0.3 footcandles above ambient lighting at night (per International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) and IES RP-39 standards).
- LED signs shall have a minimum display time of 10 seconds and a maximum transition time of 2 seconds.
- LED signs shall include full-cutoff fixtures or visors along the top and sides of the billboard face to prevent light spill.

During the day, the monopoles and sign faces would be visible above grassland vegetation but below the treeline of the adjacent hills. Their moderate height would prevent skyline breakage and maintain visual continuity of the horizon line. Non-reflective finishes and muted colors (dark bronze or matte gray) could minimize contrast. Light sources could introduce minor skyglow or glare. With downcast LED fixtures, automatic dimming, and no uplighting, night impacts would remain localized and less than significant.

With the recommended performance standards being incorporated into the City's Sign Regulations, staff believes possible addition of one billboard on the east side of Highway 101

and potentially three billboards on the west side of Highway 101 is **visually compatible** to the Highway 101 corridor north of the Eel River.

The potential billboards would avoid skyline intrusion, maintain the gateway's open views, and be consistent with the Rio Dell General Plan's economic development policies while preserving the aesthetic integrity of the Eel River approach.

The CEQA Guidelines provide for a "common sense exemption" (CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3)) for projects where it can be seen with certainty that the activity will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Based on the proposed amendments, including the addition of a number of performance standards and comments or lack of comments, recommendations from referral agencies, staff believes that the project is Statutorily Exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b) (3) of the CEQA Guidelines, Title 14, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations. Pursuant to Section 15061(b) (3) of the CEQA Guidelines this exemption is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a **significant** effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the project is not subject to CEQA.

**Attachment 1:** Map of Existing Signs at the HRDBP

**Attachment 2:** Inadvertent Discovery Protocol Affidavit

**Attachment 3:** Sign Examples

**Attachment 4:** Resolution No. 189-2025

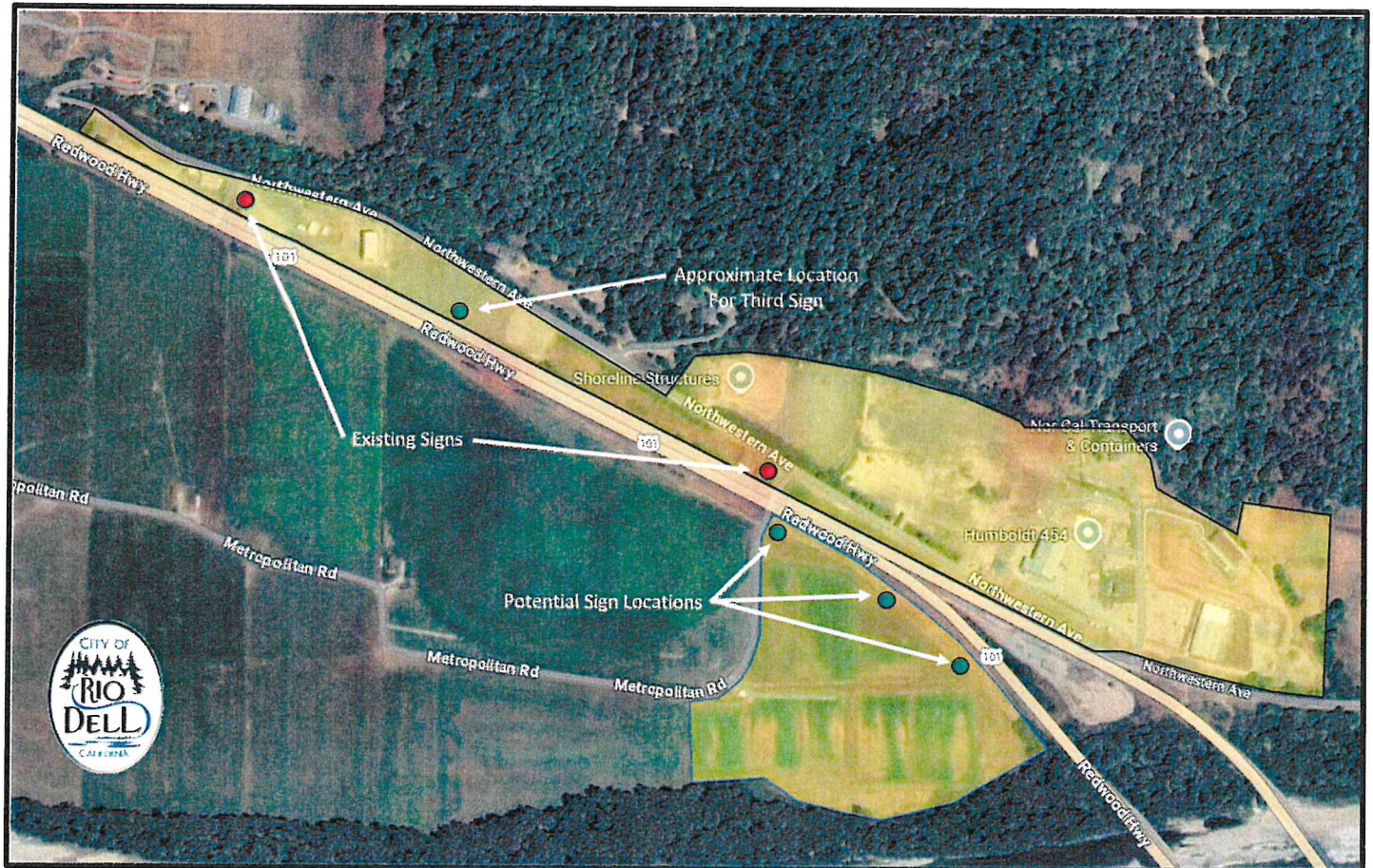
**Attachment 5:** Draft Ordinance No. 419-2025





Community Development Department  
675 Wildwood Avenue  
Rio Dell, CA 95562  
(707) 764-3532

## City of Rio Dell – Sign Regulations Amendments



**Project Description:** A text amendment to the City's Sign Regulations to (1) amend the minimum distance between signs for  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to 1000 feet on the east side of Highway 101 and 500 feet on the west side of Highway 101; and (2) establish a community-oriented billboard definition and regulations; and (3) rezone a portion of the City's wastewater disposal field to Industrial Commercial with a Qualified (Q) combining zone (IC-Q) to limit uses to billboards.

The City's current sign regulations allow for up to three signs at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP). There are currently two signs at the HRDBP, one at the southern entrance and one at the northern entrance. The current  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile separation requirement eliminates the potential for a third billboard.

The City is considering rezoning a portion of the City's wastewater disposal field on the west side of Highway 101 across from the HRDBP from Public Facility (PF) to Industrial Commercial with a Qualified Combining Zone (IC-Q). The IC-Q Combining Zone would limit uses on the City's wastewater disposal parcel to billboards. The total area considered for the rezone is approximately 3,000 square feet, three locations 20' x 50' each. Future ground disturbance would be limited to six-foot (6') diameter foundation for a freeway-oriented billboard up 480 square feet. It is expected that the community-oriented billboards, limited to 200 square feet will have two, two-foot (2') diameter foundations.





Community Development Department  
675 Wildwood Avenue  
Rio Dell, CA 95562  
(707) 764-3532

### Inadvertent Discovery Protocol Affidavit

Property Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. If potential archaeological resources, paleontological resources or human remains are unearthed during grading activities, all work ground disturbing activities shall be stopped and a qualified archaeologist funded by the applicant and approved by the City of Rio Dell and the Wiyot Tribe, shall be contracted to evaluate the find, determine its significance, and identify any required mitigation (e.g., data recovery, resource recovery, in-situ preservation/capping, etc.). Any such mitigation shall be implemented by the developer prior to resumption of any ground disturbing activities.

2. In accordance with California Health and Safety Code §7050.5 and California Public Resources Code §5097.94 and 5097.98, if human remains are uncovered during project subsurface construction activities, all work shall be suspended immediately and the City of Rio Dell, Humboldt County Coroner and the Bear River Band of the Wiyot Nation shall be immediately notified. If the remains are determined by the Coroner to be Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) shall be notified within 24 hours of the determination, and the guidelines of the NAHC shall be adhered to in the treatment and disposition of the remains.

State laws call for specific procedures and timelines to be followed in cases when human remains are discovered on private or non-Federal public land in California. It includes penalties (felony) for violating the rules for reporting discoveries, or for possessing or receiving Native American remains or grave goods:

- Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code and Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code (PRC) outline requirements for handling inadvertent discoveries of human remains, including those determined to be Native American with or without associated grave goods, found on private or non-Federal public lands. PRC 5097.99 (as amended by SB 447) specifies penalties for illegally possessing or obtaining Native American remains or associated grave goods.

Another California law imposes strong civil penalties for maliciously digging, destroying or defacing a California Indian cultural or sacred site:

- California Native American Historic Resource Protection Act of 2002 (SB 1816, adding Chapter 1.76 to Division 5 of the PRC), imposes civil penalties including imprisonment and fines up to \$50,000 per violation, for persons who unlawfully and maliciously excavate upon, remove, destroy, injure, or deface a Native American historic, cultural, or sacred site that is listed or may be listed in the California Register of Historic Resources.

Persons failing to comply with the required protocols may be subject to prosecution to the full extent of applicable laws (felony offense).

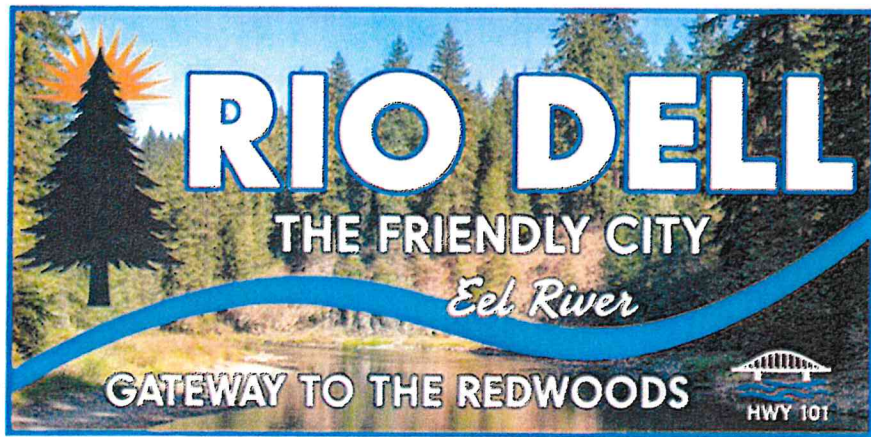
***I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to the above Inadvertent Discovery Protocol.***

Print Owner's  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

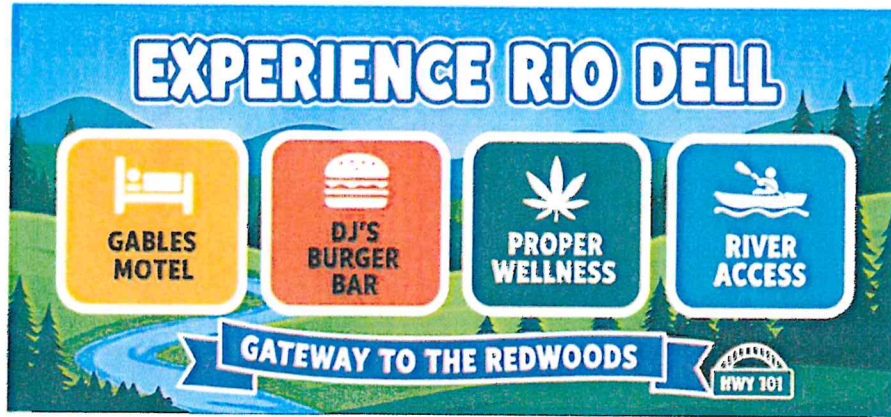
Owner's  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Contractor's  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ License  
No. \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor's  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_













## **RESOLUTION NO. 189-2025**



### **A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF RIO DELL RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 17 (ZONING ORDINANCE) REGARDING FREEWAY-ORIENTED SIGNS (BILLBOARDS), ESTABLISH A DEFINITION AND USE TYPE FOR COMMUNITY-ORIENTED BILLBOARDS, AND REZONE PORTIONS OF THE WASTEWATER DISPOSAL FIELD PARCEL**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council directed staff to present options to amend the City's Zoning Ordinance (Title 17) concerning freeway-oriented signs (billboards); and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments are intended to:

1. **Facilitate a third billboard** on the east side of Highway 101 within the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP) by amending the minimum separation distance;
2. **Establish a definition and use type** for "Community-Oriented Billboards" to promote the City and its businesses; and
3. **Facilitate up to three billboards** (including one Community-Oriented Billboard) on the west side of Highway 101 on the City's Wastewater Disposal Field parcel, requiring the **rezoning** of small, designated portions of that parcel to Industrial Commercial (IC) with a Qualified (Q) Combining Zone; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council held discussions on billboard regulations on October 7, 2025, and October 21, 2025, in response to requests to promote the City and its businesses; and



**WHEREAS**, staff is recommending amending the minimum separation distance between billboards from one-half mile (2,640 feet) to **1,000 feet** within the HRDBP, which exceeds the minimum 100-foot separation required by the State's Outdoor Advertising Act (OAA) within City limits; and

**WHEREAS**, to allow billboards on the west side of Highway 101, which are currently restricted to the HRDBP zone, staff recommends rezoning three small, 20' x 50' areas of the Wastewater Disposal Field parcel to **Industrial Commercial (IC) with a Qualified (Q) Combining Zone**, with the (Q) Zone limiting future use on these areas exclusively to billboards; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments and rezone were processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (**CEQA**) and were referred to relevant local and responsible agencies, including Caltrans, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the local Wiyot tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, no significant environmental concerns were raised by the referral agencies, and the City is incorporating recommended performance standards to mitigate visual impacts and an inadvertent archaeological discoveries protocol; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments incorporate a number of performance standards into the City's Sign Regulations to minimize potential visual impacts, including:

- Spacing billboards at least **400 feet apart** on the west side of Highway 101.
- Limiting billboard height to **35 feet** on the east side (HRDBP) and **25 feet** on the west side of Highway 101.
- Requiring **non-reflective, earth-tone finishes** on poles and rear panels.
- Implementing strict **performance standards for LED signs** concerning brightness (maximum 0.3 footcandles above ambient lighting at night), display time (minimum 10 seconds), transition time (maximum 2 seconds), and light spill (full-cutoff fixtures/visors); and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has reviewed the staff report, heard testimony, and considered all information presented; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission finds that the project is **Statutorily Exempt** from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines (General Rule), as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project, with the recommended performance standards, may have a significant effect on the environment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Planning Commission of the City of Rio Dell finds the proposed amendments and rezone are consistent with the required findings:

1. **General Plan Consistency:** The proposed amendment is **consistent and compatible** with the General Plan's economic development policies (P1.3.2-1, P1.3.2-2, P1.3.2-3) by providing new economic opportunities, promoting local businesses, and encouraging public/private partnerships, thereby facilitating the General Plan goal "To grow sustainably, provide economic opportunities and local jobs."
2. **CEQA Compliance:** The proposed amendments have been processed in accordance with CEQA and are found to be **Statutorily Exempt** pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines (General Rule).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Planning Commission of the City of Rio Dell **recommends that the City Council approve** the proposed amendments to Title 17, including:

1. Amending the minimum separation distance for billboards in the HRDBP to **1,000 feet**.
2. Establishing a definition and use type for **Community-Oriented Billboards**.



3. **Rezoning** three designated areas on the City's Wastewater Disposal Field parcel from their current zone to **Industrial Commercial (IC) with a Qualified (Q) Combining Zone**.
4. Adopting the new **Performance Standards** for freeway-oriented signs.

**PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Rio Dell on November 25, 2025 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

---

Chair Nick Angeloff

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

City of Rio Dell

ATTEST:

I, Karen Dunham, City Clerk for the City of Rio Dell, State of California, hereby certify the above and foregoing to be a full, true and correct copy of Resolution No. 189-2025 adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Rio Dell on November 25, 2025.

---

Karen Dunham, City Clerk, City of Rio Dell

**ORDINANCE NO. 419-2025**



**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIO DELL AMENDING THE CITY'S SIGN REGULATIONS 17.30.320, CHAPTER 17.25 TO INCLUDE A QUALIFIED COMBINING ZONE AND REDESIGNATING APPROXIMATELY 3000 SQUARE FEET FROM PUBLIC FACILITY TO INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL WITH A QUALIFIED COMBINING ZONE TO LIMIT FUTURE USES TO FREEWAY-ORIENTED SIGNS (BILLBOARDS) AND COMMUNITY-ORIENTED BILLBOARDS**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council directed staff to present options to amend the City's Zoning Ordinance (Title 17) concerning freeway-oriented signs (billboards); and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments are intended to:

1. **Facilitate a third billboard** on the east side of Highway 101 within the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP) by amending the minimum separation distance;
2. **Establish a definition and use type** for "Community-Oriented Billboards" to promote the City and its businesses; and
3. **Facilitate up to three billboards** (including one Community-Oriented Billboard) on the west side of Highway 101 on the City's Wastewater Disposal Field parcel, requiring the **rezoning** of small, designated portions of that parcel to Industrial Commercial (IC) with a Qualified (Q) Combining Zone; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council held discussions on billboard regulations on October 7, 2025, and October 21, 2025, in response to requests to promote the City and its businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, staff is recommending amending the minimum separation distance between billboards from one-half mile (2,640 feet) to **1,000 feet** within the HRDBP, which exceeds the minimum 100-foot separation required by the State's Outdoor Advertising Act (OAA) within City limits; and

**WHEREAS**, to allow billboards on the west side of Highway 101, which are currently restricted to the HRDBP zone, staff recommends rezoning three small, 20' x 50' areas of the Wastewater Disposal Field parcel to **Industrial Commercial (IC) with a Qualified (Q) Combining Zone**, with the (Q) Zone limiting future use on these areas exclusively to billboards; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments and rezone were processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (**CEQA**) and were referred to relevant local and responsible agencies, including Caltrans, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the local Wiyot tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, no significant environmental concerns were raised by the referral agencies, and the City is incorporating recommended performance standards to mitigate visual impacts and an inadvertent archaeological discoveries protocol; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments incorporate a number of performance standards into the City's Sign Regulations to minimize potential visual impacts, including:

- Spacing billboards at least **400 feet apart** on the west side of Highway 101.
- Limiting billboard height to **35 feet** on the east side (HRDBP) and **25 feet** on the west side of Highway 101.
- Requiring **non-reflective, earth-tone finishes** on poles and rear panels.
- Implementing strict **performance standards for LED signs** concerning brightness (maximum 0.3 footcandles above ambient lighting at night), display time (minimum 10 seconds), transition time (maximum 2 seconds), and light spill (full-cutoff fixtures/visors); and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has reviewed the staff report, heard testimony, and considered all information presented; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission found that the project is **Statutorily Exempt** from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines (General Rule), as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project, with the recommended performance standards, may have a significant effect on the environment.

**WHEREAS** the Planning Commission of the City of Rio Dell finds the proposed amendments and rezone are consistent with the required findings: and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council finds and determines that the proposed amendments to the Municipal Code are adopted pursuant to the City's police power authority to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of the City of Rio Dell as follows:

**SECTION 1. Incorporation of Recitals.**

The City Council of the City of Rio Dell finds that the above recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by reference.

**SECTION 2. Amendments to Chapter 17 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code.**

Section 17.10.010 Definitions is amended to include:

**Community-Oriented Billboard.** Means a **Freeway-Oriented Sign** (Billboard) whose advertising display is restricted to promoting City-sponsored events, local businesses, public services, or general information regarding the City of Rio Dell and its surrounding community. This use type is typically managed or sponsored by a municipal or civic entity, such as the City or the Chamber of Commerce.



Chapter 17.25 is amended to establish a Qualified (Q) combining zone, Section 17.25.070 as follows:

Section 17.25.040 is amended as follows:

17.25.040 Combining zones and respective designations.

The following table lists the area combining zones and their respective designators:

| Combining Zone      | Designation | Code Section |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Design Review       | D           | 17.25.050    |
| Planned Development | PD          | 17.25.060    |
| Qualified           | Q           | 17.25.070    |

17.25.070 Qualified combining zone.

(1) Purpose and Intent. The Qualified Combining Zone Regulations are intended to be combined with principal zones to help more precisely implement the adopted General Plan and/or to restrict uses that may not be compatible or desirable with the allowed uses of the principal zone or surrounding properties.

(2) Applicability. The City Council may combine the Qualified Combining Zone with any principal zone. In combining the Qualified Combining Zone with any principal zone, the City Council may delete principally permitted uses, conditionally permitted uses, or accessory uses. The City Council may also require Use Permits for principal permitted uses or accessory uses. Zone reclassifications to implement the Qualified Combining Zone are subject to making all of the required findings in Chapter 17.35 of this division.

(3) Map Designation. When combined with a principal zone, the Qualified Combining Zone shall be represented on the adopted zoning maps by the Q designator. The Q designator shall immediately follow the Principal Zone designator. For example: UR-Q, RM-Q, IC-Q. Reference to the specific requirements of any “Q”/“Qualified” Zone is contained on the zoning map, and the requirements are set forth in the specific ordinances which create each “Q” Zone.

Section 17.30.320(5)(j) is hereby amended as follows:

(j) Freeway Oriented Billboards. Notwithstanding the prohibition against off-site commercial signs, freeway oriented billboards may be permitted subject to first obtaining a conditional use permit from the Planning Commission. For the purposes of this section, a “freeway oriented billboard” is hereby defined as an outdoor freestanding sign board which is located within 100 feet of State Highway 101 and which advertises a business, service or product which is not produced or sold at the site of the sign. A conditional use permit for a freeway oriented billboard may be issued only if the proposed billboard complies with all of the following conditions:

(i) Location. A freeway oriented billboard shall be located only on property zoned Industrial Commercial and located at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park and the City’s wastewaters disposal field on the west side of Highway 101. No freeway oriented billboard shall be located closer than ~~one-half mile~~ 1000 feet to another freeway oriented billboard at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park and 400 feet on the City’s wastewater disposal field on the west side of Highway 101. No freeway oriented billboard shall be located on or within any public right-of-way.

(ii) Maximum Number of Freeway Oriented Billboards. No more than a total of three freeway oriented billboards may be constructed or approved at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park and no more than a total of three freeway oriented billboards, including community oriented billboards on the City’s wastewaters disposal field on the west side of Highway 101 by the City

at any time; provided, that each sign must meet all the conditions of this section. Once there are three freeway oriented billboard use permits issued [at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park](#) and three freeway oriented billboards on the City's wastewaters disposal field on the west side of Highway 101 ~~in the City~~, no other use permit application for a freeway oriented billboard can be processed by the City.

(iii) Height. No freeway oriented billboard shall exceed a height of 35 feet as measured from the existing grade of the property on which the freeway oriented billboard will be located.

(iv) Size of Signage. No freeway oriented billboard shall exceed 480 square feet of advertising surface area. No freeway oriented billboard may contain more than two advertising surface areas. No advertising surface area may contain more than two advertisements.

(v) Lighting. A freeway oriented billboard may be illuminated in accordance with this title; however, no blinking, flashing, rotating, animated lighting or movement of any kind shall be permitted. [Lighting for non-LED signs shall be downward-directed. In addition, LED signs shall comply with the following:](#)

- LED signs shall have automatic brightness controls limiting nighttime brightness to a maximum [0.3 footcandles above ambient](#) lighting at night (per [International Dark-Sky Association \(IDA\)](#) and [IES RP-39](#) standards).
- LED signs shall have a minimum display time of 10 seconds and a maximum transition time of 2 seconds.
- LED signs shall include full-cutoff fixtures or visors along the top and sides of the billboard face to prevent light spill.

(vi) Approval by State of California. Freeway oriented billboards receiving a conditional use permit from the City shall not be constructed without proof of a permit issued by the State of California Department of Transportation, pursuant to the California Outdoor Advertising Act.



The City's restrictions regarding freeway oriented billboards shall apply if the City's limitations are more restrictive than the State requirements.

(vii) Structural Design. No freeway oriented billboard shall be approved without Planning Commission review and approval of the structural design. In particular, the Planning Commission shall ensure that the location, color, materials and details of the structural design of the freeway oriented billboard are attractive and compatible with surrounding land uses and the City's rural, hometown image. *Non-reflective, earth-tone finishes are required on poles and rear panels.*

(viii) Maintenance. Freeway oriented billboards and their supporting members must be maintained in good condition at all times. Upon order by the City, dilapidated freeway oriented billboards must be repaired or removed within 30 days.

*(k) Community Oriented Billboards. Notwithstanding the prohibition against off-site commercial signs, community oriented billboards may be permitted subject to first obtaining a conditional use permit from the Planning Commission. A conditional use permit for a community oriented billboard may be issued only if the proposed billboard complies with all of the following conditions:*

*(i) Location. A community oriented billboard shall be located only on property zoned Industrial Commercial and located at the City's wastewater disposal field on the west side of Highway 101. No community oriented billboard shall be located closer than 400 feet to another billboard. No community oriented billboard shall be located on or within any public right-of-way.*

*(ii) Maximum Number of Community Oriented Billboards. No more than one community oriented billboard may be constructed or approved at the City's wastewaters disposal field on the west side of Highway 101 by the City at any time; provided, that the sign must meet all the conditions of this section.*



(iii) Height. No community oriented billboard shall exceed a height of 25 feet as measured from the existing grade of the property on which the freeway oriented billboard will be located.

(iv) Size of Signage. No community oriented billboard shall exceed 200 square feet of surface area.

(v) Lighting. A community oriented billboard may be illuminated in accordance with this title; however, no blinking, flashing, rotating, animated lighting or movement of any kind shall be permitted. Lighting for non-LED signs shall be downward-directed. In addition, LED signs shall comply with the following:

- LED signs shall have automatic brightness controls limiting nighttime brightness to a maximum 0.3 footcandles above ambient lighting at night (per International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) and IES RP-39 standards).
- LED signs shall have a minimum display time of 10 seconds and a maximum transition time of 2 seconds.
- LED signs shall include full-cutoff fixtures or visors along the top and sides of the billboard face to prevent light spill.

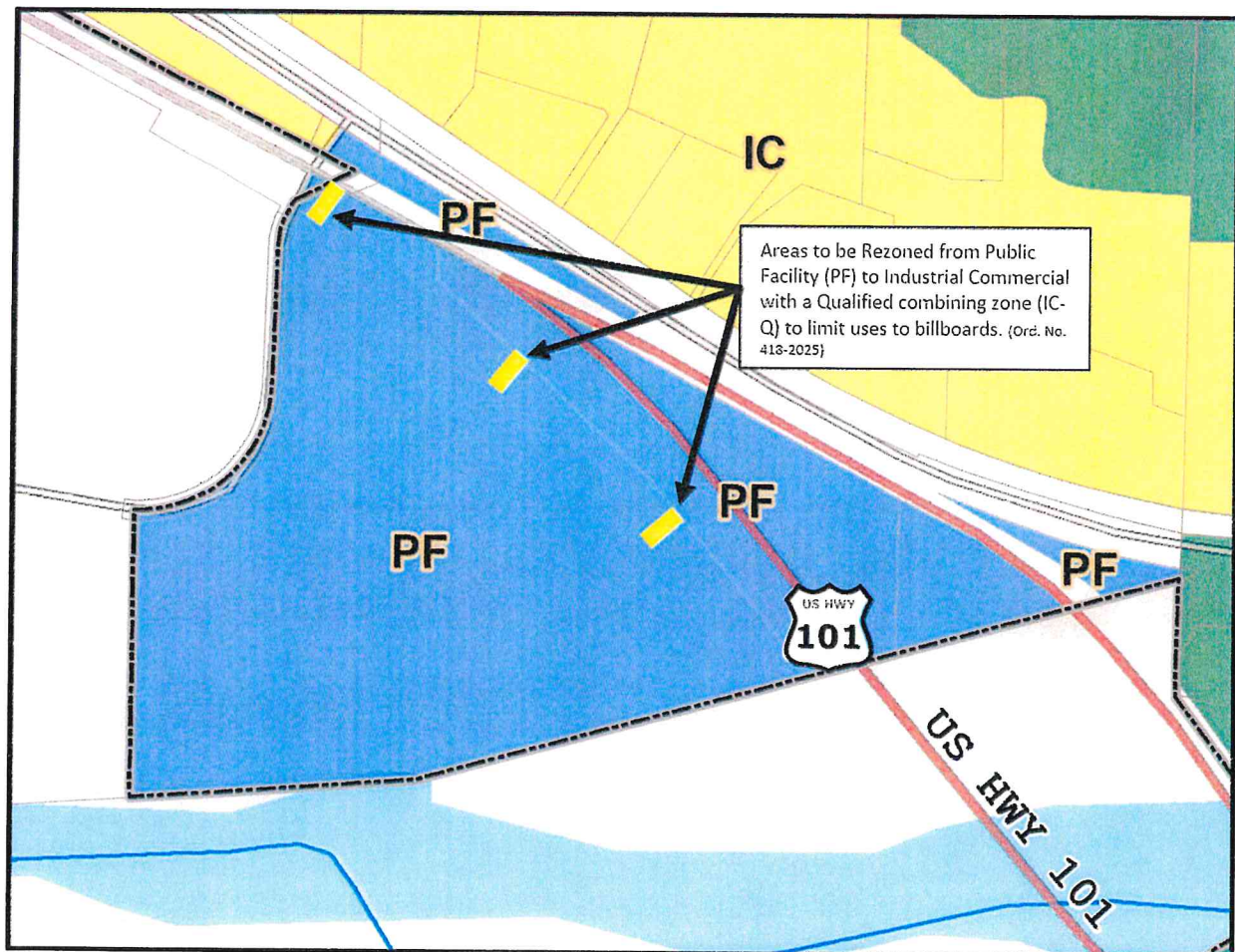
(vi) Approval by State of California. Community oriented billboards receiving a conditional use permit from the City shall not be constructed without proof of a permit issued by the State of California Department of Transportation, pursuant to the California Outdoor Advertising Act. The City's restrictions regarding community oriented billboards shall apply if the City's limitations are more restrictive than the State requirements.

(vii) Structural Design. No community oriented billboard shall be approved without Planning Commission review and approval of the structural design. In particular, the Planning Commission shall ensure that the location, color, materials and details of the structural design of the community oriented billboard are attractive and compatible with surrounding land uses and the City's rural, hometown image. Non-reflective, earth-tone finishes are required on poles and rear panels.

(viii) Maintenance. Freeway oriented billboards and their supporting members must be maintained in good condition at all times. Upon order by the City, dilapidated freeway oriented billboards must be repaired or removed within 30 days.

### SECTION 3. Zoning Map Amendment.

The areas identified below are hereby rezoned from Public Facilities (PF) to Industrial Commercial with a Qualified combining zone (IC-Q) to limit uses to billboards.



#### **SECTION 4. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).**

Based on the proposed amendments, potential future project locations, the addition of a number of performance standards and comments or lack of comments, recommendations from referral agencies, the City Council finds the project is Statutorily Exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b) (3) of the CEQA Guidelines, Title 14, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations. Pursuant to Section 15061(b) (3) of the CEQA Guidelines this exemption is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a *significant* effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the project is not subject to CEQA.

#### **SECTION 5. Severability.**

In the event that a court of competent jurisdiction holds any Section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase in this Ordinance unconstitutional, preempted, or otherwise invalid, the invalid portion shall be severed from this Ordinance and shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have adopted each Section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase in this Ordinance irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses or phrases in this Ordinance might be declared unconstitutional, preempted, or otherwise invalid.

#### **Section 6. Effective Date**

This ordinance becomes effective thirty (30) days after its approval and adoption.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the forgoing Ordinance was duly introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Rio Dell on December 2, 2025, and furthermore the forgoing Ordinance was passed, approved and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Rio Dell, held on January 6, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

---

Debra Garnes, Mayor

ATTEST:

I, Karen Dunham, City Clerk for the City of Rio Dell, State of California, hereby certify the above and foregoing to be a full, true and correct copy of Ordinance No. 419-2025 which was passed, approved and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Rio Dell, held on January 6, 2026.

---

Karen Dunham, City Clerk, City of Rio Dell