



# CITY OF ORLANDO

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April 6, 2015

Tyrone Smith, OCPS  
for Barbara Jenkins  
Orange County School Board  
445 W. Amelia Blvd.  
Orlando, FL 32801

RE: Letter of Determination for Regional Public Facility Digital Signs for Dr. Phillips & Edgewater High Schools (LDC2015-00080)

Mr. Smith:

I have reviewed your Letter of Determination request relative to replacement of existing manual reader board signs with a digital Regional Public Landmark Sign at Dr. Phillips High School (6500 Turkey Lake Rd.) and Edgewater High School (3100 Edgewater Dr.). Your request is as follows:

The Orange County Public Schools Facilities Department is requesting permission from the City of Orlando to convert the existing marquees [signs] at Dr. Phillips and Edgewater High Schools, to digital marquees [signs]. The existing marquee frames will be reused. Digital marquees [signs] will allow the schools to update the marquees wirelessly and provide more efficient and detailed information to students, parents, and the community.

The signs will include the following:

- A 1 ft. x 8 ft. marquee (with high school name & OCPS logo) and a 3 ft. x 8 ft. message center
- Technology - ImageStar Software
- Light Meter - Ambient daylight sensor with time and temperature functionality
- 10 Second Delay - The software programming allows a 10 second delay between messages
- No 3'd Party Advertising - The District will enforce no 3'd party advertising
- No Video - The video function can be deactivated in the software

You have provided a site plan and photos illustrating where the existing and proposed signs are and will be located, as well as industry specifications for the signs and a copy of the OCPS permit application.

**Analysis** – Staff has previously discussed the issue of replacing static message board signs at public high schools. The City's Land Development Code provides a mechanism for requesting placement/replacement of such signs, requiring approval of an ordinance by City Council. You have requested replacement of two (2) such signs, which we can do via one ordinance, rather than separate ordinances. In the future, the City can look at preparing another ordinance when sign plans are finalized for the other three (3) public high schools within the Orlando City limits.

While the Land Development Code does not expressly allow digital signs, staff has allowed them to be used for public institutions such as Leu Gardens and the Citrus Bowl, gas station pricing and for public information signs, via Planning Official Determination, to ensure said signs foster the public health, safety and welfare by promoting safe efficient access and to ensure that said digital signs will not have a negative impact on surrounding properties or land uses.

**City Code** - City regulations regarding signs are provided in Chapter 64 of the Land Development Code (LDC). Specifically, LDC Section 64.320, Regional Public Facility Identification

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Signage, provides that the City Council may approve specific signage for public landmarks and public regional facilities which serve the greater metropolitan area and/or the tourist population. Such signage shall be approved by ordinance for regional public landmarks/facilities identified by City Council, and may include both on-site and off-site roadway/directional signage. The Section also provides that the ordinance approving signage for regional public landmarks shall include a determination by the Planning Official that: (1) the facility is a regional public landmark; (2) such signage fosters the public health, safety, and welfare by promoting safe and efficient public access to the regional public facility; and (3) such signage shall not have a negative impact on surrounding land uses.

In reviewing signs for conformance with the Regional Public Facility sign regulations, the Planning Official considers the extent to which the proposed signs conform to city-wide sign regulations. For example, LDC Section 64.270 prohibits billboard signs, defined as a sign which contains commercial or non-commercial advertising depicting a business, organization, event, person, place, goods, services or other things not sold, located or available upon the parcel or tract of real property on which the sign is located. In addition, LDC Section 64.300 prohibits flashing lights and electronically controlled message centers.

**Operational Conditions** - To ensure that the proposed digital public facility identification signs are generally consistent with City-wide sign regulations and do not have a negative impact on surrounding residential land uses, nine (9) operational conditions are proposed to restrict the messages displayed on the two (2) proposed high school facility identification signs, as follows:

1. Sign copy shall change no more than 6 times per hour (10 minute delays).
2. The sign shall only display black letters on white background during daylight hours.
3. The sign shall only display white letters on black background during post-dusk hours.
4. The sign shall not display moving, rotating, or pulsating images.
5. The sign shall not display graphic images except for the OCPS or school logo.
6. The sign shall only operate from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
7. The sign shall automatically adapt its brightness level to ambient light levels during the day and at night.
8. The "School Name" header may be either digital or a fixed panel that is lit from within or behind (if it is a fixed back-lit panel, it may be lit all hours (24 hours a day)).
9. The sign message may only identify or advertise uses, events, and activities located or conducted on each individual school site.

**Determination.** Subject to the nine (9) operational conditions presented above, the Planning Official has determined that:

1. Dr. Phillips and Edgewater High Schools are regional public landmarks. Due to their size, function, location and unique features, the facilities clearly serve residents of multiple neighborhoods within the City and County.
2. The proposed digital identification signage will foster the public health, safety, and welfare by promoting safe and efficient public access to the two (2) respective high school facilities. Events at area high schools can attract innumerable attendees year-round. The proposed signage will improve safety and efficiency by identifying the name of the facility and daily or weekly events at the two public high schools.
3. The proposed digital identification signage is not expected to have a negative impact on surrounding land uses. The two (2) high schools generally abut single-family residential

neighborhoods, low intensity office or public, recreational or institutional uses. In addition, the main entrances to the high schools and the proposed sign locations are all located on four-lane streets with center turn lanes. The proposed signs are expected to improve traffic flow and reduce confusion by more clearly identifying the properties for first time visitors and by providing public notice of current or upcoming events. The proposed operational restrictions will help preserve the existing character of the areas around the high schools, while accommodating the needs of facilities that host multiple events throughout the week, month and year.

4. The proposed digital high school identification signs are eligible for designation as regional public facility identification signs, as provided in LDC Section 64.320. The same type signs may not be allowed on private schools, churches or other such institutions unless said locations and signs meet the criteria of LDC Section 64.270, Regional Public Landmark Signs.
5. The proposed signs shall conform to the nine (9) operational conditions described in this determination and to the type, size, location, materials and other details provided by OCPS on 2/27/2015 (Exhibit 1 ).
6. This determination only addresses the signage described in the attached sign package.

This Letter of Determination does not constitute approval to develop. It addresses only the Land Development Code standards expressly represented in this letter. The determinations of this letter are also restricted to the two (2) specific public high school properties and are not transferable to other parcels of land or other public high schools. The applicant shall comply with all other applicable requirements of the Land Development Code, including any additional review requirements and **shall receive all necessary permits before initiating development.** I hereby also request that the Office of Legal Affairs prepare an ordinance for City Council review and adoption at the next available City Council meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Burnett, Planner III, at 407-246-3609 or at [james.burnett@cityoforlando.net](mailto:james.burnett@cityoforlando.net).

Sincerely,

Dean Grandin, AICP  
Planning Division Manager

Attachments/Exhibits

Cc: Karl Wielecki, Planning Manager  
Kyle Shephard, City Attorney's Office