
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
(EDUCC)

FROM: ERIK A. BREFELDT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: WALDO ROAD SIGN STANDARDS

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2006

Background

At prior EDUCC meetings (March and May, 2006), a discussion was held by Committee members regarding the existing status of development regulations along the Waldo Road Corridor and particularly, existing sign regulations. This discussion began because of various upcoming development proposals and their prospective effect upon existing development and the overall aesthetic integrity of this important Corridor.

Currently, a variety of land use and zoning designations together comprise the Waldo Road Corridor (running from approximately E. University Avenue to the City limits) including everything from Commercial to Residential to Industrial.

A portion of the Waldo Road Corridor lies within the Central Corridors overlay (this area runs from E. University Avenue north to 8th Avenue NE). Central Corridors are, amongst other things, established to improve the sense of place and community; improve the environment for business, including small, locally owned businesses; and designed to strike a balance between the needs of the car and pedestrian. This designation carries with it additional development standards related to building placement, building wall articulation, building orientation and location and amount of parking.

A portion of the Waldo Road Corridor also lies within the Eastside CRA (from approximately E. University Avenue north to 16th Avenue NE) and has been a source of funds for sign improvements in the past. CRA staff reports that there is approximately \$29,000 remaining in the Eastside budget for façade improvements.

Finally, the Waldo Road Corridor has been the subject of community redevelopment analysis in the past primarily through Plan East Gainesville; however, this planning effort focused on many prospective development opportunities in areas served by the Corridor, but not the Corridor itself. Currently, the University of Florida is seeking joint funding for a Waldo Road Corridor “Visioning Analysis” designed to consolidate these efforts.

Sign Regulations Generally

The placement, installation and maintenance of signs are governed by the sign ordinance in the Land Development Code.

Generally, permanent signs are only allowable in non-residential zoning districts. Multiple-occupancy commercial tenants (such as in a shopping center) and stand alone commercial buildings may have one or two ground-mounted signs depending on the amount of street frontage on a primary right of way (in the event there are additional rights of way, a secondary sign is allowable). To encourage the use of “monument signs” (rather than pole signs) a 20% size bonus is allowed by the sign ordinance.

Wall-mounted signs are also allowable and are limited to two for single tenant buildings with the sign size being no larger than 20% of the surface area of the building facade or 200 square feet, whichever is less. A multiple tenant building is limited to one sign referring to the name of the shopping center. This sign can be no larger than 20% of the surface area of the building facade or 200 square feet, whichever is less. In cases where the building fronts an additional right of way, additional wall signage is allowable. In addition, each building tenant is allowed two signs up to 10% of their building façade.

Pedestrian oriented signs are allowed in non-residential districts and the illumination of signs is restricted as well.

Non-conforming sign regulations state that any sign not allowed by the sign ordinance, but for which a permit has previously been issued by the City, is considered a lawful, non-conforming sign. These signs may continue to exist as non-conforming signs and shall not be required to be removed unless the value of the sign or building declines by 80% due to damage.

Issues for Consideration

Several pending development proposals along the Waldo Road Corridor make the issue of sign controls a timely one. Currently, there are signs located

along the corridor (most legally non-conforming) that do not contribute to an aesthetically pleasing environment. There are also signs that have been installed recently (many point to the Jones-Edmunds* monument sign as an example) that promote this sought-after, attractive environment.

Issues for the Committee's consideration includes the following:

- 1) Should additional sign regulations be drafted for the Waldo Road Corridor that will create a special sign design theme and special Corridor specifications?
- 2) Should property owners with legal non-conforming signs be provided with additional opportunities for funding to improve their signs; if so, what funding sources should be pursued?
- 3) Besides sign regulations, should Central Corridors regulatory provisions regarding building placement, building wall articulation, building orientation and parking be extended further north along the Waldo Road Corridor?
- 4) Should existing sign regulations for the Waldo Road Corridor be revised concurrently with the proposed University of Florida Waldo Road Corridor Visioning Analysis or should revisions to the sign regulations move forward irrespective of the this analysis?
- 5) In the event incentives are to continue, or be enhanced, for the installation of the ideal sign, should City and CRA staff coordinate modification/enhancement of the existing CRA program?

Staff Recommendation

EDUCC to City Commission: Direct staff to draft language designed to improve sign regulations intended to promote a pleasing aesthetic environment on the Waldo Road Corridor and to analyze and modify the existing Eastside CRA funding program intended to fund improvements associated with signs along affected portions of the Corridor.

* CRA staff reports that the total Jones Edmunds façade project totaled approximately \$34,500 with the sign costing approximately \$12,200. The CRA covered approximately \$15,000 of total façade project costs.