



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

For the Meeting of January 6, 2026

☐ Consent Item; ☒ Discussion Item

To: City Council

From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director 

Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

Date: December 29, 2025

Subject: Adoption of Ordinance 419-2026 amending the City's Sign/Billboard regulations 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 up to three billboards, including a community-oriented billboard for use by the Chamber of Commerce; and (4) establish a Qualified (Q) Combining zone.

Recommendation:

That the City Council:

1. Allow staff to summarize Ordinance No. 419-2026 containing text amendments to the sign regulations, Section 17.30.320 of the RDMC 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 Ordinance No. 419-2026.

Summary

At the direction of the City Council, on December 2, 2025, staff is presented 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 Industrial Commercial (IC) to facilitate a maximum of three billboards, including a community-oriented billboard for use by the Chamber of Commerce. The amendments also include the establishment of a Qualified (Q) Combining zone. In this case staff is recommending a Qualified (Q) Combining zone be applied to the base zone of Industrial Commercial (IC-Q) to limit uses to billboards only.

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.

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. It should be noted that at your meeting on December 2nd, it was pointed out that the current market for billboards is soft. The soft market was also recently reported by the County's only local billboard vendor, Allpoints advertising.



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 x 40 ft (480 sq ft), height ≤ 35 ft;
- Billboards B & C: up to 10 ft x 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., ≥ 400–500 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

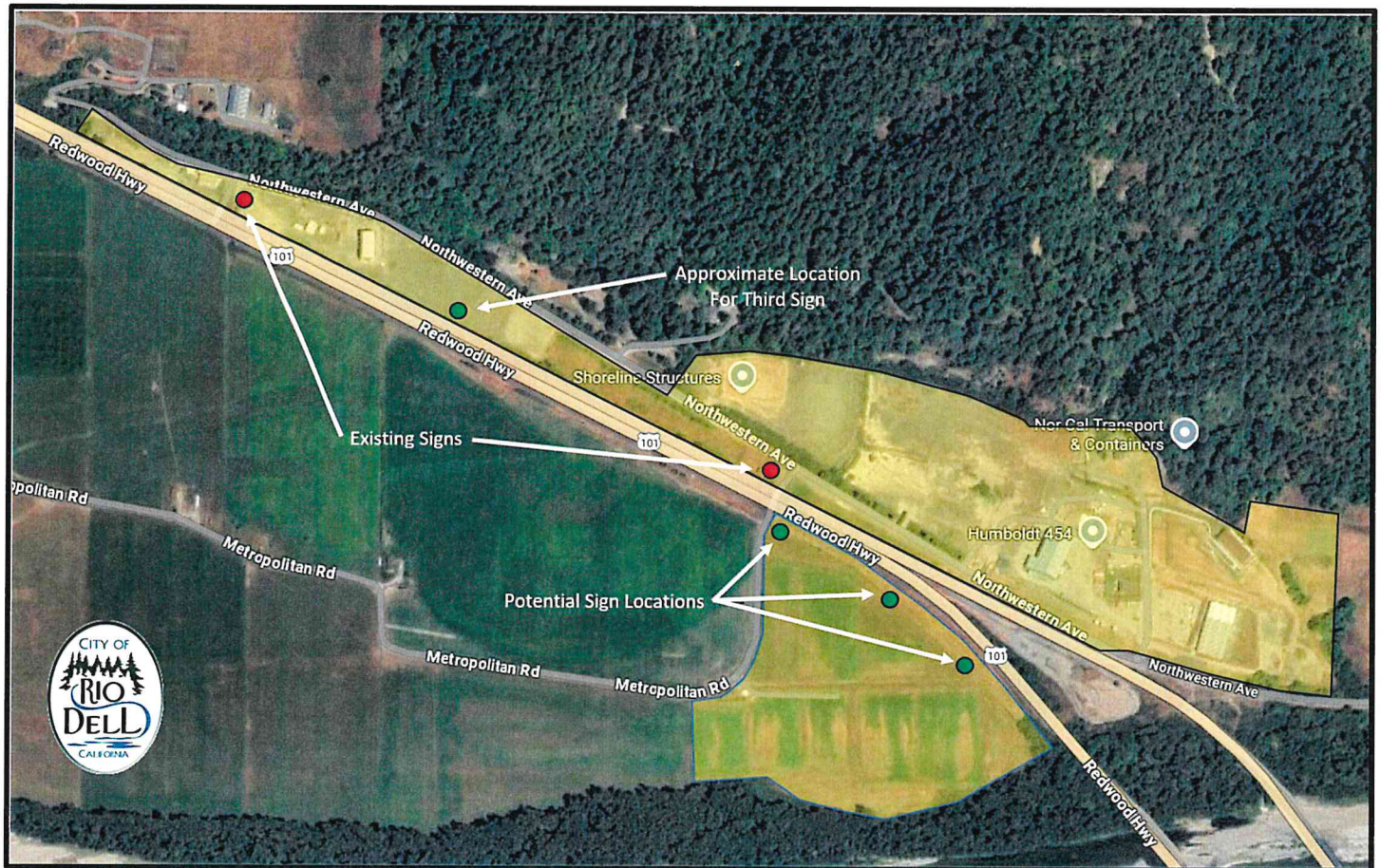
Attachment 3: Sign Examples

Attachment 4: Draft Ordinance No. 419-2026



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).

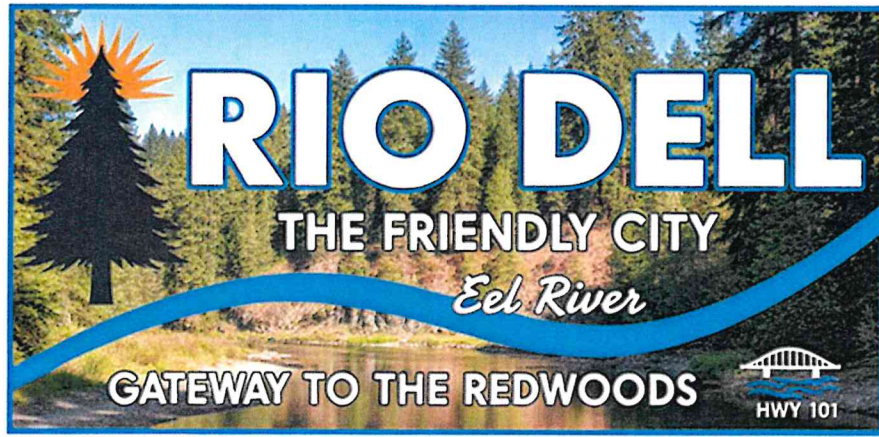
I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to the above Inadvertent Discovery Protocol.

Print Owner's
Name: _____

Owner's
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Contractor's
Name: _____ License
No. _____

Contractor's
Signature: _____ Date: _____

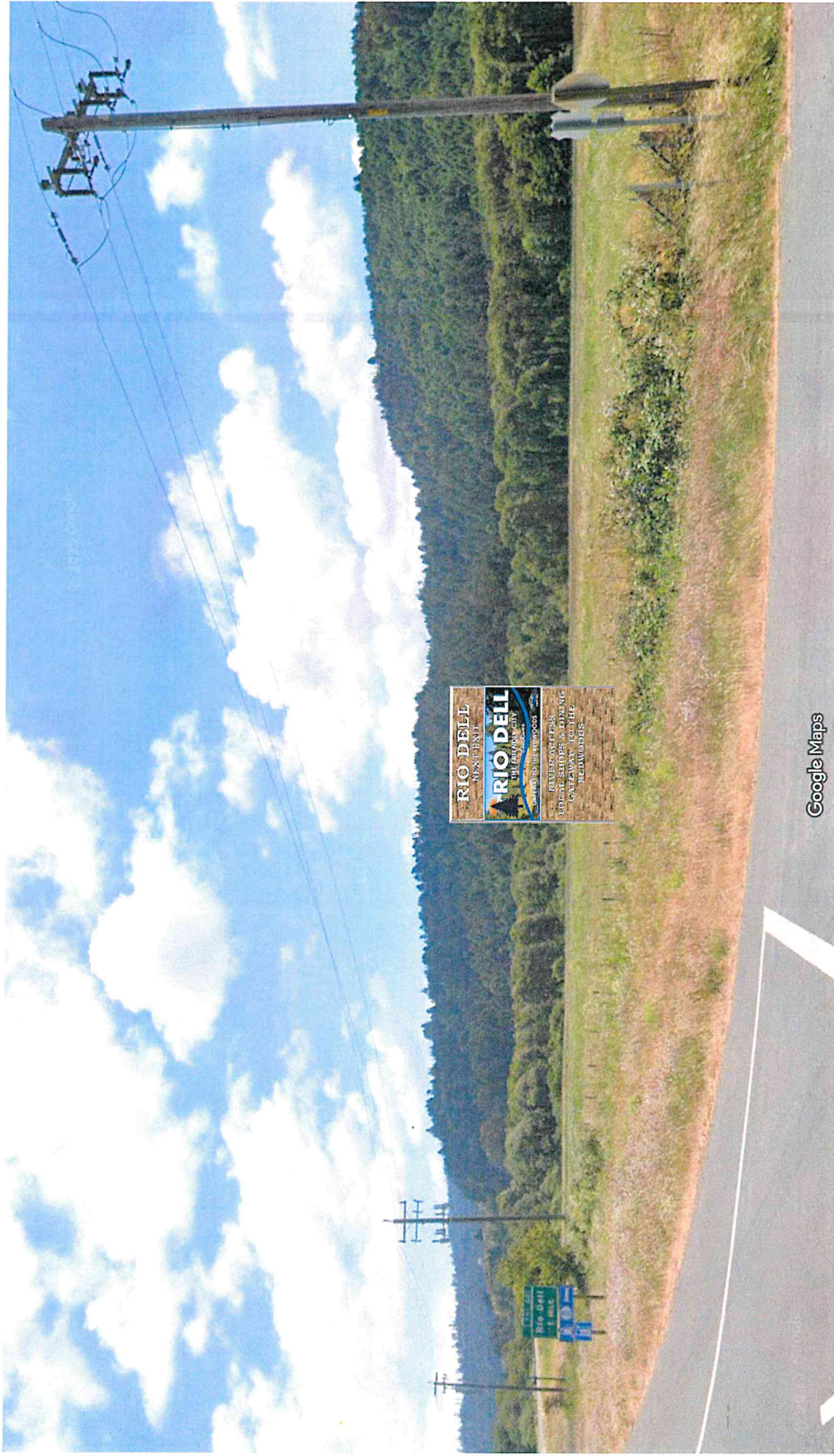


Sign Examples For Illustration Purposes Only

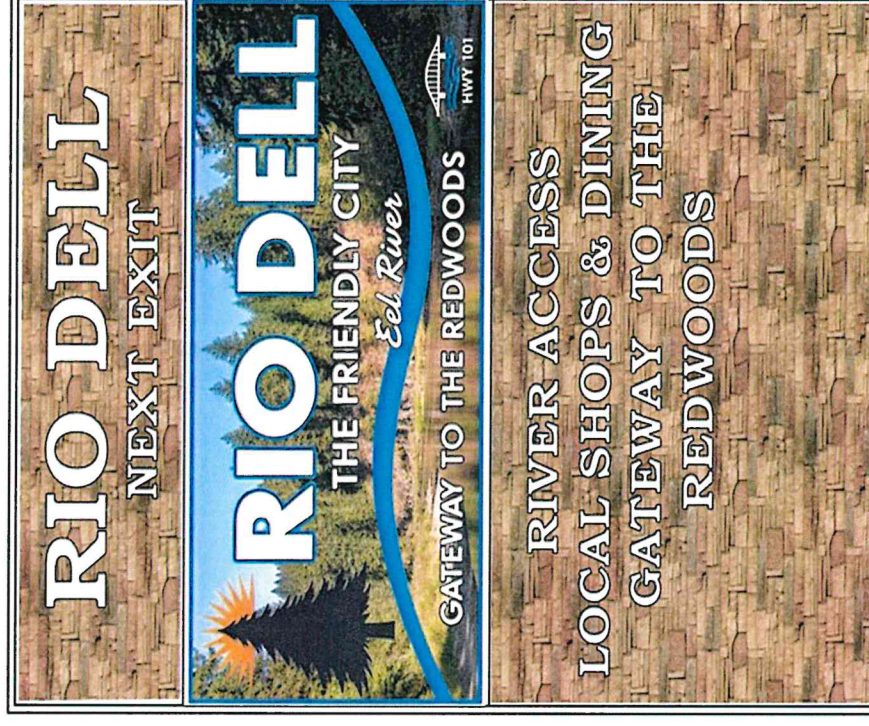


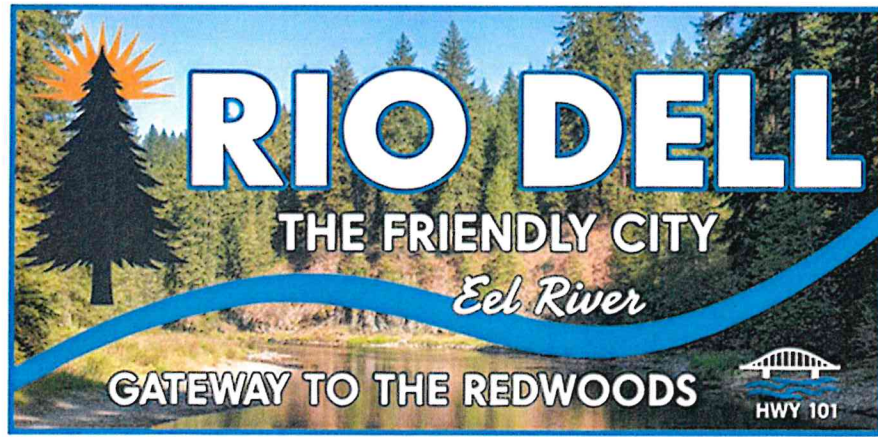
Google Maps

Sign Examples For Illustration Purposes Only



Sign Examples
For Illustration Purposes Only











ORDINANCE NO. 419-2026



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 founds 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 I. 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.

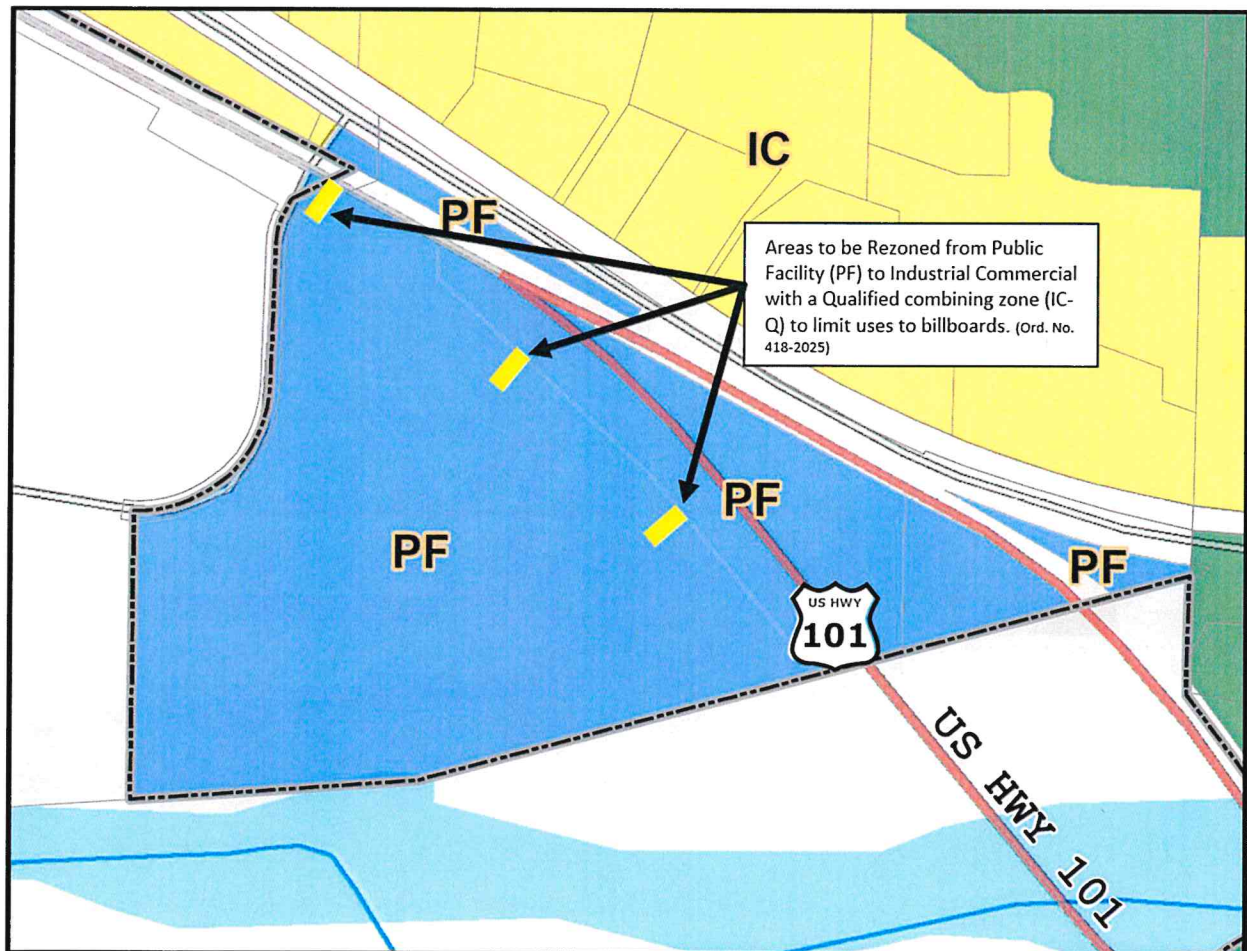
(vi) Approval by State of California. Community oriented billboards receiving a conditional use permit from the City shall not be constructed without proof of a permit issued by the State of California Department of Transportation, pursuant to the California Outdoor Advertising Act. The City's restrictions 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. 419-2026 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