



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**

Planning and Community Development Department  
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587-3225  
www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

---

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** David Ramsay, City Manager  
**From:** Eric Shields, Planning Director  
**Date:** July 2, 2008  
**Subject:** Juanita High School Sign Request

**RECOMMENDATION**

Direct staff to prepare a letter to Juanita High School Principal Gary Moed and PTSA president Lea Aemisegger, responding to their request for a code amendment to allow an electronic reader board sign at the high school. Potential responses include:

- o Agree to consider the requested amendment in the next available packet of code amendments (early 2009); or
- o Decline to consider the requested code amendment; or
- o Direct Mr. Moed and Ms. Aemisegger to submit a request as part of the 2009 annual Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code amendment process.

**BACKGROUND DISCUSSION**

**Request** The principal and PTSA president of Juanita High School have submitted a letter to the City Council asking that the Zoning Code be amended to allow Juanita High to display an electronic reader board sign. As described below, the code now prohibits such signs, except through a “master sign plan” and the criteria for approving a master sign plan do not favor approval of an electronic sign within a residential zone.

It is my understanding that the Fire and Building Department has expressed an interest in installing electronic reader boards at fire stations. Such signs would face the same Zoning Code restrictions as for Juanita High and other schools.

**Existing Regulations** The Zoning Code now prohibits “any sign that rotates, turns or moves by electrical or mechanical means except barber poles” and except for a “changing message center” which is defined as “an electronically controlled public service time and temperature sign where copy changes are shown on the same lamp bank.”

However, the code also provides a mechanism, called a master sign plan, to “encourage the integration of signs into the framework of the building or buildings on the subject property.”

Through a master sign plan, an applicant may propose signs that would otherwise not be allowed in exchange for providing an aesthetically superior sign package. In the past, electronic reader boards have been approved as part of a master sign plan package for a few businesses. master sign plans are approved through a formal review process that involves a Planning Director decision. The application fee is \$2,756.

Theoretically, a master sign plan would be an option for Juanita High School to permit an electronic reader board. However, the criteria for approving a master sign plan present problems for such a proposal. The criteria are:

- a) The proposal manifest exceptional effort toward creating visual harmony between the sign, buildings, and other components of the subject property through the use of a consistent design theme...
- b) The proposed deviations are the minimum necessary to create readable signs from the rights of way providing direct vehicular access based on traffic speeds and patterns in the area of the subject property.
- c) The signs are in character and orientation with planned and existing uses in the area of the subject property.

The last criterion is a particular problem since electronic signs are not normally allowed in residential areas and most if not all schools are located within residential zones.

**Code Amendment Process** The Planning Department typically prepares a group of potential Zoning Code amendments once per year. The Department maintains a list of potential amendments and groups the amendments by similar topics and/ or priorities. I anticipate that the next amendments (after the group now in progress) will be prepared in early 2009. Recent amendments to the Code set forth a process by which citizens may initiate code amendment requests. The deadline for submitting such requests is December 1, 2008. The fee for submitting a request is \$300, with an additional \$300 required if the City Council determines the request has merit and should be given further consideration. Alternatively, the City Council or Planning Commission may direct that a potential amendment be added to the list maintained by the Planning Department.

Cc: Gary Moed  
Lea Aemisegger  
Steve Cole

Es: Juanita High sign request



Lake Washington  
School District No. 414

RECEIVED

JUN 27 2008

AM PM  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
BY \_\_\_\_\_

Gary Moed- Principal

**Juanita High School**

10601 N.E. 132nd Street • Kirkland, WA 98034

Office: (425) 823-7600 • Fax: (425) 823-7637

gmoed@lwsd.org

June 26, 2008

Kirkland City Council  
Kirkland, WA

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are requesting a modification to your Zoning and Signage ordinance to allow Juanita High School to acquire an electronic reader board. This acquisition would allow us to enhance our communication and partnership with the large number of students, families and community members that we serve throughout the City of Kirkland.

Whether we are sharing information about the schedule for student final examinations or the schedule for community swim time in our pool, an electronic reader board would allow for information to be conveyed in a way that will support our ongoing goal of and commitment to a partnership with our community.

High schools are an important part of communities and information is the means by which we stay in touch with community we serve. Having a means to convey information about topics that impact the children and adults within our community would provide additional means for us to meet an important goal.

With this letter I am indicating my support for allowing us to begin the process of acquiring an electronic reader board and would be happy to speak further in connection with this topic at the appropriate venue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary Moed  
Principal  
Juanita High School

Lea Aemisegger  
PTSA President  
Juanita High School

cc Steve Cole, LWSD  
Eric Shields, City of Kirkland