



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Planning and Community Development Department**  
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587-3225  
[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us)

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**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** David Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Eric Shields, AICP, Planning Director  
Nancy Cox, AICP, Development Review Manager

**Date:** May 21, 2009

**Subject:** Response to Correspondence from Karen Story Requesting More Stringent Sign Rules

**RECOMMENDATION**

City Council approve the attached response letter to Karen Story regarding the sign code.

**BACKGROUND**

The City Council and Planning Commission received an email from Ms. Story requesting that the City amend the sign ordinance to place greater limitations on the display of temporary commercial and real estate signs. She suggests that the City should consider adopting an ordinance similar to Scottsdale, Arizona where temporary commercial, real estate and human billboards are not allowed and campaign, other temporary non-commercial signs and real estate open house signs are strictly regulated. Finally she requested that citizens be allowed to remove illegal signs.

## Nancy Cox

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**From:** karen@tinyisland.com  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2009 9:13 AM  
**To:** Nancy Cox; Eric Shields; Judd Tuberg; Paul Stewart  
**Cc:** KirklandCouncil; Carrie Wood; Kari Page  
**Subject:** Request for new signage ordinances

**Categories:** follow up

Dear Planning Commission and Council,

I am writing to ask that the City of Kirkland enact more stringent signage rules in public places.

Currently Kit's Cameras has peppered Kirkland with brightly colored "Going out of business" signs. Recently, several Redmond builders placed dozens of signs along NE 85th and surrounding roads. Other temporary commercial signs abound. Real estate signs proliferate on every corner. Open house signs block sidewalks.

I think temporary commercial signs are unsightly and should be banned. Businesses should not be allowed to use our public roadways for free advertising.

In addition, I think that citizens should be allowed to remove illegal signs and either dispose of them, or bring them to a designated location. The city does not have the resources to remove every sign. Like graffiti, the quicker the signs are removed the better.

Scottsdale Arizona has long been a leader in "minimizing visual blight." Temporary commercial signs are not allowed. Campaign and other temporary non-commercial signs must meet stringent regulations. For example, they may only be displayed on private property and are limited to 120 days.

<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/bldgresources/counterresources/signpermitpacket/CampaignSigns.asp>

Off property real estate "for sale" signs are not allowed. Open house signs may not be placed within a median or island, on a sidewalk, in landscaped areas located between the sidewalk and street, or within 15 feet of the street pavement edge.

<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/bldgresources/counterresources/signpermitpacket/openhouse.asp>

Human billboards are banned.

Scottsdale's ordinances have been in effect for many years, and should serve as legal precedent for similar ordinances in Kirkland.

I strongly urge Kirkland to adopt stricter public signage and advertising rules like Scottsdale's to help make our city a more pleasant and attractive place to live.

Sincerely,  
Karen Story  
9017 Slater Ave NE  
Kirkland 98033

June 2, 2009

**D R A F T**

Karen Story  
9017 Slater Ave. NE  
Kirkland, WA 98033

Re: Kirkland's sign code

Dear Ms. Story:

Thank you for your email about making the sign code more stringent. You express concern about the proliferation of temporary commercial and real estate signs in the city. Some of these signs can be removed by code enforcement staff to the extent that they are in violation of the existing code. Our staff regularly removes signs and notifies the responsible parties.

However, your request to completely ban temporary commercial and real estate signs is not addressed in the existing code. This would require an in-depth code amendment study by staff and the Planning Commission and involvement by all stake holders. In addition it would need to meet certain legal standards. It would likely include the review of codes from other cities such as Scottsdale's which you mention in your email. The Council has recently reviewed the Planning Department's work program and it does not include a code amendment project for 2009. We will direct the planning staff to include this issue on the code amendment list and for consideration in a future work program.

Your suggestion that citizens be allowed to remove illegal signs and put them in a designated location is problematic. It may be unsafe for citizens to remove these signs which are often located near traffic. The Code Enforcement officers are equipped to do this safely. Also, code enforcement staff have a full knowledge of City sign regulations and can communicate those regulations to the sign installers. Please contact the Planning Department at (425) 587-3225 when you see signs that are of concern.

Thank you again for expressing your concern and contacting the Council.

Sincerely,

Kirkland City Council

By: James L. Lauinger, Mayor

Cc: Planning Commission