



Staff Report  
Plan Commission Meeting – August 2, 2022

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**General Amendment – PL District Electronic Changeable Copy Signs**

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<b>Applicant:</b>	Andy Schulthess, St. Charles Community Unit School District 303
<b>Purpose:</b>	Allow electronic changeable copy signs in the Public Lands district to cover a greater percentage of the overall sign
<b>Application:</b>	General Amendment
<b>Public Hearing:</b>	Yes
<b>Summary of Proposal:</b>	<p>An amendment to Ch. 17.28 of the Zoning Ordinance has been requested to allow electronic changeable copy signs in the Public Lands district to constitute up to 75% of the total sign area.</p> <p>Currently, electronic changeable copy signs are limited to 50% of the total sign area in most zoning districts, including Public Lands.</p>
<b>Info / Procedure on Application:</b>	<p><b>General Amendment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An application requesting a change to the Zoning Ordinance, Title 17 of the City Code. A change may be requested to a numerical standard or to any other text of the Zoning Ordinance. Often, a General Amendment is proposed to change the standards that apply to a specific zoning district or a specific land use or business category. Changes to the text apply to all properties in the City that are located in the same zoning district or fall within the same category of land use or business.</li><li>• Public hearing is required. No mailed notice to surrounding property owners.</li><li>• Findings: 6 items of information to consider in making a recommendation; all items need not be in the affirmative to recommend approval.</li></ul>
<b>Suggested Action:</b>	Conduct the public hearing and close if all testimony has been taken. The item is listed for discussion and recommendation, should the Plan Commission feel that they have enough information to make a recommendation.
<b>Staff Contact:</b>	Ellen Johnson, Planner

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**I. BACKGROUND**

Electronic Changeable Copy Sign is defined in Ch. 17.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, as follows:

*Any sign that, by its design, allows for a change in the lettering or symbols it displays, by mechanical, electric, or other means.*

Electronic changeable copy signs are permitted in all Zoning Districts where internally illuminated signs are permitted. This includes commercial, office/research, manufacturing and public lands districts. Electronic changeable copy signs are not permitted as stand-alone signs, rather they must constitute only a portion of a standard sign. Section 17.28.060.B provides requirements for electronic changeable copy signs:

1. *In the CBD-1 and CBD-2 Districts, Electronic Changeable Copy Signs shall not exceed 30% of the total sign area of the sign on which it is located, or 30 square feet, whichever is less. Sign images shall change no more frequently than once every 30 seconds.*
2. *In all other zoning districts, Electronic Changeable Copy Signs shall not exceed 50% of the total sign area of the sign on which it is located, or 50 square feet, whichever is less. Sign images shall change no more frequently than once every 15 seconds.*
3. *Electronic Changeable Copy Signs may display both text and images, but the display shall remain static. The duration of the change of image, copy or illustration shall not exceed one second. Use of moving images or transitions between static images are prohibited.*

## II. PROPOSAL / ANALYSIS

Andy Schulthess, representing School District 303, is seeking to erect a new sign at St. Charles North High School. The sign incorporates a changeable copy sign which constitutes approximately 71% of the sign on which it is located. In order to allow this sign, the applicant is seeking an ordinance amendment to increase the allowable sign coverage of electronic changeable copy signs in the PL Public Lands district.

The following amendment is requested:

Ch. 17.28 “Signs”, Section 17.28.060 “Illumination”, Item B. – Add the following:

In the PL District, Electronic Changeable Copy Sign shall not exceed 75% of the total sign area on which it is located or 50 square feet, whichever is less.

**Discussion:** The requested change would allow for electronic changeable copy signs in the Public Lands district to cover a majority (75%) of the sign on which they are located. Maximum area of changeable copy signs in the PL district would remain 50 sf, which is the same as currently applies to the PL district, office/research, manufacturing, and commercial districts outside of downtown.

Properties zoned PL are generally schools, parks, forest preserves, schools, City facilities, golf courses, and cemeteries. The purpose of the PL District is as follows:

*To protect and maintain open space properties owned by the City, the Park District, the School District, and public and private recreation. The development standards are intended to provide flexibility to the governmental and semi-public entities in the use of their land while protecting surrounding residential uses.*

Considerations:

- Most PL district properties are large in area given the land uses encompassed by the district. This results in potentially greater separation between a freestanding sign incorporating changeable copy and sensitive uses such as residential than would be typical for commercial properties near residential uses.
- Changeable copy signs for PL properties will generally be used for sharing information of interest to the community rather than advertising for commercial purposes.

## III. OPTIONS FOR PLAN COMMISSION ACTION

### 1. Public Hearing – Close or Continue

If the Plan Commission feels they have adequate information the public hearing may be closed. The public hearing may be continued if additional information is deemed necessary to provide a recommendation.

***If Public Hearing is closed-*****2. Make a Recommendation to Planning & Development Committee**

There are 6 Findings of Fact for General Amendment. All findings need not be made in the affirmative to recommend approval. The Recommendation shall be based on the preponderance of evidence. The applicant has provided responses to the Findings of Fact for General Amendment.

**a. Recommend approval** of the application.

- If Plan Commission feels it necessary to meet the Findings, modifications to the proposed amendment language could be added as conditions of approval.

**OR****b. Recommend denial** of the application.

- Plan Commission must substantiate how certain findings are not being met in order to recommend denial.

**IV. ATTACHMENTS**

- General Amendment Application; received 6/30/22
- St. Charles North Sign Rendering (for reference)

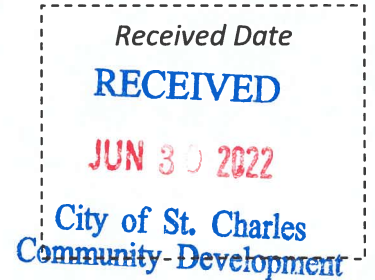
City of St. Charles  
 Community Development Division  
 2 E. Main Street  
 St. Charles, IL 60174



Phone: (630) 377-4443  
 Email: [cd@stcharlesil.gov](mailto:cd@stcharlesil.gov)

## GENERAL AMENDMENT APPLICATION

<b>For City Use</b>	
Project Name:	GA-Electronic Changeable Copy Signs
Project Number:	2022 -PR- 011
Cityview Project Number:	PLGA 202200050



- File this application to request an amendment to the text of the St. Charles Zoning Ordinance (City Code Title 17).
- Complete the application and submit with all required attachments to the Community Development Division.
- The information you provide must be complete and accurate. If you have any questions please contact the Community Development Division.
- City staff will review the submittal for completeness and for compliance with applicable requirements prior to establishing a public hearing date.

<b>1. Applicant Information:</b>	Name: Andy Schulthess	Phone: (630) 675-0635
	Address 901 S. Peck Rd Saint Charles, IL 60175	Email: Andy.Schulthess@ d303.org

**2. Information Regarding General Amendment:**

What is the amendment regarding?

To amend the Zoning Code to allow "PL" or public land to have up to 75% of the sign to be electronic

What Code sections are proposed for amendment?

Chapter(s): 17.28

Section(s): 17.28.060 item B

Wording of the proposed Amendment: *Insert below or attached on a separate page*

In the PL District electronic changable copy signs shall not exceed 75% of the total sign area on which it is located or 50 sqft, whichever is less

**3. Required Attachments:**

*If multiple zoning or subdivision applications will be submitted concurrently, do not submit duplicate checklist items or plans. Fee must be paid for each application.*

APPLICATION FEE: \$500 N/A

REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES AGREEMENT: An original, executed Reimbursement of Fees Agreement and deposit of funds in escrow with the City, as provided by Appendix B of the Zoning Ordinance.

REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES INITIAL DEPOSIT: Deposit of funds in escrow with the City. Required deposit for a General Amendment application only: \$1,000.

FINDINGS OF FACT: Fill out the attached form based on the proposed General Amendment.

I (we) certify that this application and the documents submitted with it are true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief.

Andy Schultness  
Applicant

June 28, 2022  
Date

## FINDINGS OF FACT – GENERAL AMENDMENT

The St. Charles Zoning Ordinance requires the Plan Commission to consider factors listed below in making a recommendation to the City Council.

As an applicant, the "burden of proof" is on you to show why the proposed amendment is appropriate. Therefore, you need to "make your case" by explaining how the following factors support your proposal. If a factor does not apply to the amendment in question, indicate "not applicable" and explain why it does not apply.

### Amendment Description/Ordinance Section Number:

#### From the St. Charles Zoning Ordinance, Section 17.04.320.C:

In making its recommendation to grant or deny an application for a Zoning Text Amendment, the Plan Commission shall consider:

**1. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the City's Comprehensive Plan.**

Support and provide for the needs of the schools and school children within St. Charles and to ensure that schools remain a valued asset for the community, the City should work with the school district to identify and prioritize future infrastructure needs and projects

**2. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent and general regulations of this Title.**

Purpose and intent to better share info with the community

**3. Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, is more workable than the existing text, or reflects a change in policy.**

The proposed amendment would reflect a change in policy to allow larger electronic changable copy signs in the PL district.

4. The extent to which the proposed amendment would be in the public interest and would not serve solely the interest of the applicant.

The proposed amendment would allow all uses in the PL district to have larger electronic changeable copy signs (including other schools, cultural facilities, theaters)  
It would allow them to better share information with the public

5. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.

The proposed amendment will not create non conformities

6. The implications of the proposed amendment on all similarly zoned property in the City.

The proposed amendment will apply to all properties in the PL zoning district

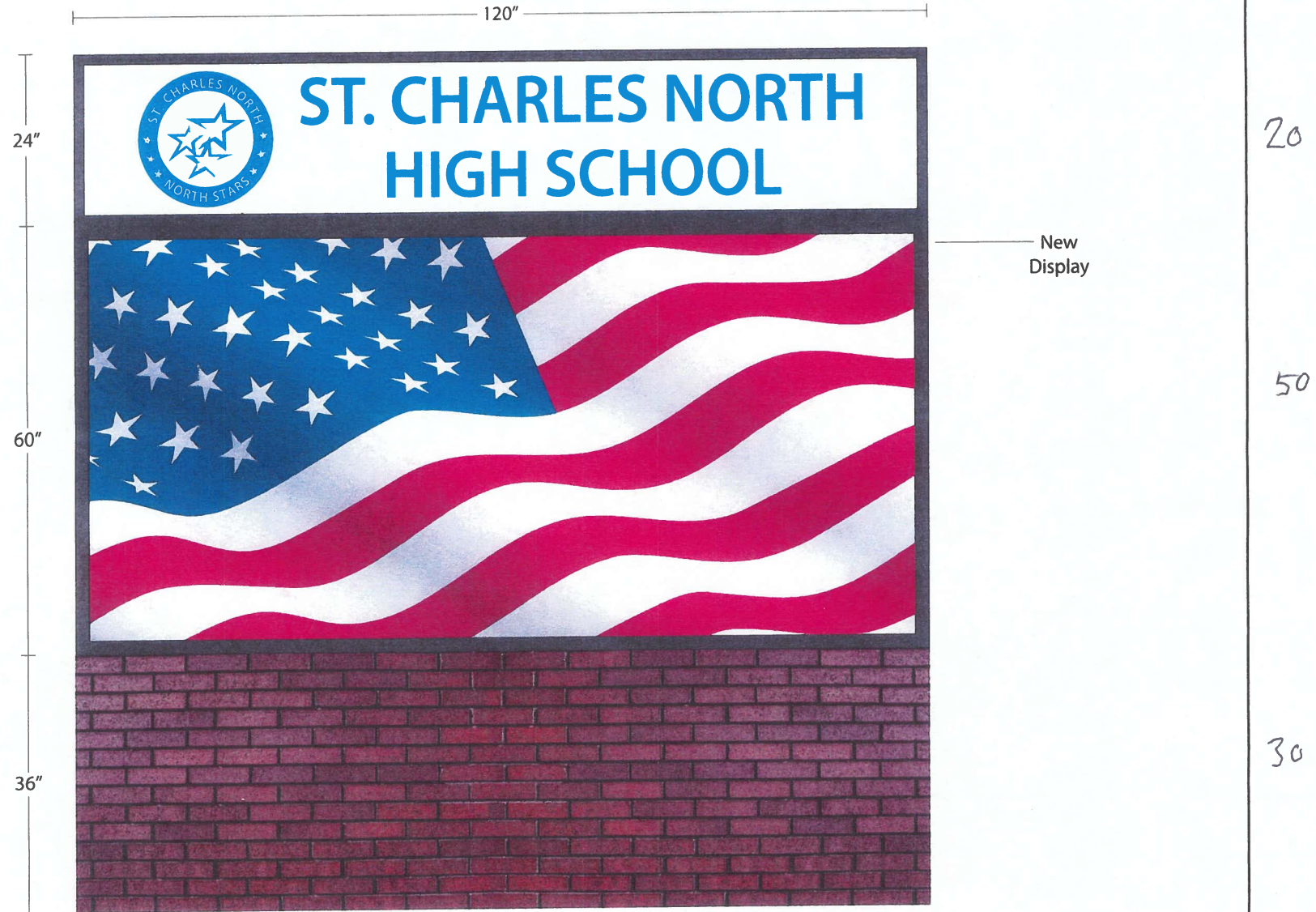
Plan Commission recommendation shall be based upon the preponderance of the evidence presented and the Commission shall not be required to find each Finding of Fact in the affirmative to recommend approval of an application for General Amendment.

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Sandwich, IL 60548

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Option 2



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