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## City of Loveland takes on electronic signs

By Cara O'Brien  
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Craig Lindberg, owner of the Loveland Dairy Queen, would like to get a new electronic sign to advertise his Blizzard, sundae and other specials.

He'd like a sign that could flash high-resolution photos of Dairy Queen's new products.

But Lindberg said proposed changes to the city's ordinance regarding electronic signs would not allow him to use a sign like that to its full potential.

"I'm worried the restrictions will hurt my ability to get a message across to the customers," Lindberg said.

The city is proposing two major changes to its electronic sign ordinances. It would like to allow the use of electronic signs — currently prohibited — along the Interstate 25 corridor and along the eastern portion of U.S. 34.

The changes also call for restricting the movement on signs throughout the city. Businesses would not be allowed to use signs that have "moving, blinking, chasing, scrolling or other animation effects, with the exception of fading or dissolving."

The message on the sign also would not be allowed to change more often than once a minute.

This, too, could pose a problem for Lindberg.

He said right now he likes to flash one message for a second or two, and then another for about 5 seconds.

"That's something (drivers) can read quickly ... without having to hold their eyes on the message," Lindberg said.

City staffers said the ordinance changes are designed to allow the signs where they're currently not allowed. And the staff wants the language in the city code to reflect new sign technology.

"We recognize that this technology is going to become more widespread," said Bob Paulsen, current planning manager for the city of Loveland. "The cost has been decreasing and the technology improving."

Paulsen also said the current proposal could change with the input of the Loveland City Council and business community.



Reporter-Herald/Steve Stoner

Traffic streams past along Eisenhower Boulevard on Saturday afternoon near the Dairy Queen at Eisenhower and Lincoln Avenue in Loveland.

### If You Go

**What:** Loveland City Council study session

**When:** 6:30 p.m. Tuesday

**Where:** City Council Chamber at the Loveland Municipal Building, 500 E. Third St.

**On the agenda:** The council will discuss a study of railroad track quiet zones, as well as proposed changes to the electronic sign code.

“We’ve made some proposals; we’ve adjusted those proposals,” he said. “The input we get, we certainly consider it and evaluate our position.

“If we get presented with a better position, we’ll take it.”

For example, initially the changes to the electronic sign code called for messages to remain the same for 10 minutes. Because the city staff received negative feedback from the business community on that idea, it was adjusted down.

And the now one-minute rule also could be adjusted down, Paulsen said. He said it was chosen because the city wanted to avoid a maze of flashing, changing message boards as these signs become more pervasive.

Brian Willms, president and CEO of the Loveland Chamber of Commerce, hopes the city will change the proposed ordinance.

“We acknowledge the need for updating the sign code, yet we are concerned that the proposed changes, and the impact they will have on local businesses, may not have been given reasonable consideration,” he said via e-mail.

For example, the chamber does not see a reason to require the duration of a message to be a minute or more.

“Colorado Department of Transportation’s own signs adhere to a standard interval time between 6 and 8 seconds,” Willms said, “which leads the chamber to believe if CDOT were concerned with the transition time impacting safety of the general public, they wouldn’t implement such practices.”

Some members of the business community intend to attend this week’s City Council study session, which will include discussion about the ordinance.

“We just want to be sure that businesses are educated and that they get their fair say,” said Rose Schlosser, who does office administration and marketing for Schlosser Signs in Loveland. “One of our concerns is, it would be putting more limitations on businesses during a time when the economy is going down.”

And, she said, it could hurt the company, which sells some electronic signs. If it’s too restrictive, she said, “you kind of lose the whole effectiveness of even buying an electronic message center in the first place.”

Cara O’Brien can be reached at 635-3694 or [cobrien@reporter-herald.com](mailto:cobrien@reporter-herald.com).