



To: CD11 office
Fr: Jay Handal, Chair, Board of Directors
Date: Oct. 24, 2012
Re: Resolution - Opposition to proposed new billboard ordinance

Resolution: The Board voted, 8-0, to oppose the City Council's proposal to legalizing existing digital billboards in exchange for annual fees/payments to the General Fund.

Facts and background:

1. The City Council directed its staff to draft a proposal for an ordinance to legalize existing digital billboards in exchange for annual payments to the General fund, by an 11-3 vote (Koretz, LaBonge and Garcetti voted against).
2. A total of 100 digital billboards have been installed citywide, with many on high-traffic roads like Santa Monica, Wilshire and Bundy.
3. Excessive light during night hours disturbs the sleeping patterns and mental health.
4. The WLA Area Planning Commission has upheld appeals against the installation of some digital billboards.
5. The City has won several lawsuits against sign companies, and has leverage to reduce billboards.
6. Other westside cities (Santa Monica) effectively control billboards, and some cities (Houston) have banned them, and those regulations on the commercial speech have withstood 1st Amendment challenges.
7. In 2002, the city prohibited new billboards, except in Sign Districts, and billboard companies sued to ensure their profits.
 - a. An original settlement with Clear Channel and CBS was enacted after the city was winning lawsuits, and caved in to allow 840 digital billboards. A lawsuit by Summit challenged it, and the amount was reduced to 700 digital billboards.
 - b. The court directed the city to draft a plan to resolve the lawsuits. The City is considering sign districts, which would allow billboards, in exchange for removal of billboards in other locations.

Findings and justification:

1. Revenue from the billboards can be used to cut the city's deficit.
2. Sign companies, business and local unions with special interests support the proposal.
3. Mental health suffers from the light of digital billboards intruding into homes at night.
4. Residents who claim reduced quality of life oppose the proposal.

Submitted for your consideration,

Jay Handal, Chair