



**GREATER
ECHO PARK ELYSIAN
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**



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Community Impact Statement
Council File 08-2020:
Citywide Sign Ordinance
August 26, 2014

CERTIFIED
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
APRIL 16, 2002

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To: L. A. City Councilmember Jose Huizar, Chairman of the PLUM committee
Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo
Councilmember Mitchell Englander

Re: Council File 08-2020: Citywide Sign Ordinance

The Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council requests that the following Community Impact Statement be attached to **Council File 08-2020: Citywide Sign Ordinance**.

On August 26, 2014, the Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council Board of Governors held a Brown Act compliant--noticed regular meeting, with a quorum of **14**; with a vote of **13** yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention, the GEPENC adopted the motion in support of the information gathered by the Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight and the following proposal in reference to the Citywide Sign Ordinance.

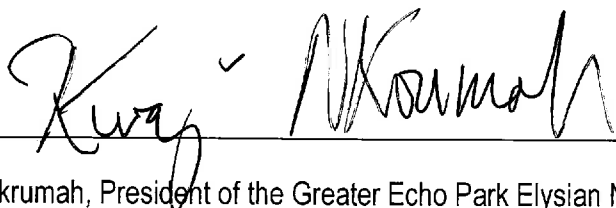
Proposal for changes in the Citywide Sign Ordinance:

1. The takedown ratio of existing billboards in exchange for putting up new off-site signs including digital, in sign districts is far too small. The takedown ratio should be increased to a minimum of 8 square feet of billboard space removed for every square foot of new digital signage that is installed.
2. Sign Districts proposed by councilmembers and developers should not be "Grandfathered." All sign districts not yet approved by the City Council should comply with the location restrictions and other provisions as set forth in the revised sign ordinance currently pending before the PLUM committee.
3. The City should not grant a blanket amnesty for unpermitted billboards. The planning department has proposed granting amnesty to more than 700 existing unpermitted billboards. These approximately 700 signs out of compliance should be subject to citation or removal, if not brought into compliance.

4. Digital Billboards should not be allowed outside sign districts. "The new sign ordinance restricts all new digital billboards to sign districts where special regulations can be set up regarding brightness, hours of operation and visibility from surrounding neighborhoods," as written by the coalition to Ban Billboard Blight that supports this compromise solution, and opposes allowing digital billboards to be permitted anywhere else.
5. Separate "community benefits" programs from the sign district ordinance; they are distinct indeed, with different purposes. The former have aesthetic value with touches of nature; the latter is pure advertisement, with outsized commercial signage.
6. Prohibit putting up any kind of signage parallel to apartment walls blocking windows; in case of an emergency, this safety hazard puts residents at risk.
7. Prohibit putting up "off-site" signage and super-graphic signs that span the skyline area of three to four small businesses, as this clutter is distracting to motorists, pedestrians, and patrons. The massive size of such signs also makes them compete visually with surrounding historical architecture.
8. Take down the clusters of billboards that have been placed above historic buildings in urban communities' commercial corridors. Not only do they compromise the ability of these public spaces to foster a sense of community - but they are also a potential hazard to the public safety. Having a clutter of signs vying for your attention from every corner is terribly distracting, and at a high-density intersection, it's dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, or motorists to lose focus on the traffic around them.
9. Support the establishment of a "sign unit" in the L.A. City Planning Department to deal with all signage issues, including the development of comprehensive regulations for on-site digital signage.

Commercial corridors in urban neighborhoods can remain viable and sustainable where there is limited signage relating to small businesses, as super-graphic signs that are out of proportion with adjacent businesses will ultimately repel patrons, in a community like ours.

Please assist in making our neighborhood commercial corridors in the City of Los Angeles viable and sustainable by prohibiting "off-site" signage, and restrict the "new" super-graphic billboards to entertainment districts.

Signed: 

Kwazi Nkrumah, President of the Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council (GEPENC)

Date: September 3, 2014 09/03/2014