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July 22, 2011

Council of the City of Los Angeles  
Planning and Land Use Management Committee  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Proposed ordinance revising the citywide sign regulations  
Council File 08-2020; 08-3386-S1

Honorable Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee:

The proposed citywide sign ordinance is the result of an effort that has taken several years and involved a great deal of essential input from stakeholders and City departments. The process began in late 2008 as pending court rulings threatened to invalidate the city's sign regulations. A comprehensive re-drafting of the sign ordinance was undertaken on an accelerated timetable. In May 2009, after extensive vetting before the City Planning Commission, PLUM Committee and City Council, the draft ordinance was put on hold pending resolution of litigation, and the ordinance along with 17 amending motions were referred back to the PLUM Committee.

In November 2010, after the City won a favorable decision in the case of *World Wide Rush v. City of Los Angeles*, the PLUM Committee directed the Department of City Planning to proceed once again with revisions to the citywide sign ordinance. These revisions were to focus on key provisions that had garnered the most support from community members, stakeholders and Council members; and remove provisions for which there had been considerable concerns that could not be satisfactorily addressed.

The proposed sign ordinance provides updates to provisions on Sign Districts, requests for deviation from the sign regulations, enforcement procedures and penalties, signs in partially enclosed spaces, digital sign regulations, hazard to traffic, freeway exposure, and other recommended changes. It also includes minor technical corrections and clarifications, and defines the "grandfathering" of sign-related processes currently under review.

In developing the currently proposed sign ordinance, the Department of City Planning worked closely with the Office of the City Attorney, Department of Building and Safety, and stakeholder groups and individuals that had been active in the consideration of the originally proposed ordinance. Coordination was also conducted with the Fire Department and Department of Transportation on provisions relevant to those departments.

## Items for Follow-Up

Due to budget and personnel constraints, the proposed sign ordinance was limited to the most critical code changes that could be properly studied with the time and resources available. While this ordinance addresses the City's top priority signage regulation issues, there are still some important issues that need to be studied and addressed. Resolution of these issues has the potential to provide considerable benefits to the City. To accomplish this, additional staffing and resources are required, in the form of specially trained planners in a Sign Unit, and consultants who can focus on the complex regulatory issues posed by signs. The issues are as follows:

**Repermitting.** For off-site signs that were constructed before the current off-site sign ban or the regulations governing off-site signs were adopted, compliance with the city's current regulations is very problematic. Particularly when the old permits are now missing or do not provide the relevant details, it can be difficult to determine whether the off-site sign should be considered "legal". This issue needs to be carefully studied to determine whether a fair set of rules can be developed that would "re-permit" off-site signs that have permits that are missing, non-specific, or that otherwise cast the legality of the sign into question. Also at issue is whether slight deviations from those old permits can now be allowed.

**Sign reduction and relocation.** Already practiced in some cities, this concept involves the removal of existing off-site signs in exchange for the construction of new off-site signs in specified locations. The proposed sign ordinance includes such a process for Sign Districts, but the question would be whether such a "sign trade" system could be established on a wider basis or citywide. The system could be based on sign area, and could also consider the type of sign (digital vs. non-digital). Careful attention would need to be paid to the locations where such sign relocation could be allowed, and perhaps most importantly, whether such a program could exist alongside the City's ban on off-site signs. The potential benefit would be added flexibility in where off-site signs can be located, and increased removal of old signs that blight many neighborhoods in exchange for substantially fewer, modern signs in appropriate locations.

**Revenue generation.** One of the most innovative ideas to come forth during the development of the sign ordinance was related to the concept of revenue generation for the City through the use of off-site signage. This concept would allow for the installation of off-site signage on City-owned properties, with a portion of the sign's revenue going to the City. This idea would need to be studied carefully from both a financial and a legal standpoint, as well as in regard to the potential impacts on neighborhoods surrounding City properties.

**Further regulation of digital displays.** The proposed ordinance contains three provisions that pertain to digital displays – brightness, message duration, and message transition. These standards reflect industry recommendations and, based on past research, seem to be standards that are widely accepted around the country. However, there are additional aspects of digital signage that should be regulated, such as size, spacing and number of signs. If approved, the efficacy of the new digital display standards should be evaluated after they are implemented. In addition, the upcoming federal study on driver safety near digital billboards will need to be reviewed for potential applications to Los Angeles. Finally, there needs to be a citywide regulatory analysis of issues specific to digital architectural lighting integrated with building surfaces.

**Freeway Exposure.** The proposed ordinance retains the existing restrictions on signs that are primarily visible from freeways, which was extensively litigated but upheld by the courts. During the review and vetting process, difficulties in enforcing and interpreting these provisions came to light, especially from the Department of Building and Safety. These provisions have been long-standing City policy and have limited visual clutter and reduced driver distraction along the

City's freeways. The efficacy of the regulations and how to better enforce them should be the subject of follow-up study and ordinance review.

**Signs Affected by Settlement Agreements.** The settlement agreements that authorized the installation of off-site signs, including off-site signs with digital displays, were recently invalidated in court. A method now needs to be developed to deal legislatively with the existing digital signs authorized by the settlement agreements, in a way that is fair and does not harm the city's sign ordinance or visual environment. This matter requires careful study, and its final resolution will likely need to take the form of an ordinance.

**Combined signs among adjacent properties.** Another concept proposed during the development of the sign ordinance was that of combining on-site signs among adjacent properties. Currently, such combined signs would be considered off-site signs if located on a single property but identifying multiple property owners. This matter would need to be studied to ensure that any additional allowances would not create a "loophole" that could lead to unintended consequences.

## Conclusion

The proposed sign ordinance represents a significant step forward in providing more up-to-date, comprehensive, enforceable and legally defensible sign regulations. Although the regulation of signs is an ever-evolving process that can move as quickly as the development of new technologies, the proposed ordinance fills in many current gaps, and will set the City on a good course that can be continued in the future by a dedicated Sign Unit. The Department of City Planning is grateful to all the participants in the ordinance development process, and looks forward to continued efforts to provide fair and sensible sign regulations for the City of Los Angeles.

If you have questions about this report, please contact me at (213) 978-1272 or [alan.bell@lacity.org](mailto:alan.bell@lacity.org), or Daisy Mo of my staff at (213) 978-1338 or [daisy.mo@lacity.org](mailto:daisy.mo@lacity.org).

Sincerely,



ALAN BELL, AICP  
Deputy Director of Planning

### Attachments:

1. Summary of Key Features of the Proposed Sign Ordinance
2. List of Motions with Directions from PLUM
3. Proposed Citywide Sign Ordinance

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

A proposed ordinance amending Sections 11.5.7, 12.05, 12.21, 12.22, 12.23, 13.11 and Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code to enact new criteria for the establishment of sign districts; create new relief provisions for certain deviations from the sign regulations; establish administrative civil penalties for violations of the sign regulations; and enact related technical corrections and other measures to control the potential impacts of signs on traffic safety and the visual environment.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1. Section 11.5.7 of Article 1.5 of Chapter 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended by adding a new Subsection K to read:

**K. Sign Regulations.** A specific plan shall not permit any of the signs prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of this Code. Any sign regulations included in a specific plan may be more restrictive and may not be more permissive than the sign regulations set forth in Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of this Code or in Article 7 of Chapter 5 of this Code.

Sec. 2. Subparagraph (2) of Paragraph (a) of Subdivision 16 of Subsection A of Section 12.05 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is deleted.

Sec. 3. Subdivision 7 of Subsection A of Section 12.21 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is deleted.

Sec. 4. Subparagraph (6) of paragraph (a) of Subdivision 23 of Subsection A of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

**(6) Signs.**

- (i) In addition to the requirements set forth in Article 4.4 of this chapter, no person shall erect on the lot or lots the following signs, as defined in Section 14.4.2 of this Code, unless a Sign Adjustment is obtained per Section 14.4.22 of this Code: pole signs; projecting signs; or roof signs.
- (ii) Monument signs and information signs shall be located only within the landscape-planted areas of the lot or lots.

Sec. 5. Subparagraph (5) of paragraph (b) of Subdivision 23 of Subsection A of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

**(5) Covenant.** Prior to the issuance of a building permit or land use permit, the owner of the lot or lots shall execute and record a covenant and agreement in a form satisfactory to the

Director of Planning, acknowledging that the owner shall implement each of the conditions set forth in Paragraph (b) of this subdivision, and shall not permit the establishment of any uses enumerated in Section 12.24 W 27 of this Code without first obtaining a conditional use approval. The covenant and agreement shall run with the land and be binding upon the owners, and any assignees, lessees, heirs, and successors of the owners. The City's right to enforce the covenant and agreement is in addition to any other remedy provided by law.

Sec. 6. Subsubparagraph (iii) of Subparagraph (1) of paragraph (c) of Subdivision 23 of Subsection A of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

- (iii) All signs proposed to be located on the site comply with Paragraph (a)(6) of this subdivision; and

Sec. 7. Subparagraph (6) of paragraph (a) of Subdivision 28 of Subsection A of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

**(6) Signs.**

- (i) In addition to the requirements set forth in Article 4.4 of this chapter, no person shall erect a pole sign or projecting sign, as defined in Section 14.4.2 of this Code, on the lot or lots unless a Sign Adjustment is obtained per Section 14.4.22 of this Code.
- (ii) Monument signs and information signs may only be located within the landscape-planted areas of the lot or lots.

Sec. 8. Paragraph (j) of Subdivision 20 of Subsection C of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is deleted.

Sec. 9. Subdivision 3 of Subsection C of Section 12.23 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is deleted.

Sec. 10. Section 91.6216.4.3 of Division 62 of Article 1 of Chapter 9 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby amended to read:

**91.6216.4.3.** The alteration, repair or rehabilitation of any existing sign or sign support structure that exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of both the sign and sign support structure must comply with all the requirements of this Code.

**EXCEPTION:** If the sign or sign support structure is a qualified historical structure then the applicant may utilize the California Historical Building Code if desired, in which case the California Historical Building Code shall govern and not Division 62 of this Code.

Sec. 11. Section 13.11 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby amended to read:

**A. Purpose.** This section sets forth procedures, guidelines and standards for the establishment of "SN" Sign Districts. The purpose of the "SN" Sign District is to facilitate the creation of a unique quality, theme or character within districts that have a distinctive regional identity and that serve as regional destinations or hubs of commerce, culture, entertainment or international transport. The creation of a unique quality, theme or character will be supported by a design or architectural theme that is compatible with the surrounding environment. A further purpose of the "SN" Sign District is to improve the visual environment of the City through a net reduction in signage.

**B. Establishment of Districts.**

1. The procedures set forth in Section 12.32 S of this Code shall be followed; however, each "SN" Sign District shall only include properties that are:

- (a) Zoned C, PF, or R5 and in an area designated on an adopted community plan as "Regional Center" or "Regional Commercial"; or
- (b) Located in the area of the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Specific Plan or of the Port of Los Angeles Plan, if such plan authorizes off-site signage through a Sign District; or
- (c) Zoned M, C, PF, or R5, and located in the "Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Area," as defined in Section 12.03 of this Code.

2. Any "SN" Sign District shall contain at least 5,000 linear feet of street frontage or 15 acres in area. For purposes of applying this provision, "street frontage" shall be as defined in Section 14.4.2 of this Code, and a "block" shall follow the definition of "block face" in Section 13.09 of this Code.

3. The boundaries of an "SN" Sign District shall not:

- (a) abut an RW1 zone or a more restrictive zone; or
- (b) abut a major highway or secondary highway identified as a scenic highway as designated on an adopted community plan; or

(c) be established within 500 feet of an ecological preserve, as defined by California Fish and Game Code Section 1584.

4. In addition to the findings required by Section 12.32 C 2 of this Code, the below findings shall be made in establishing an "SN" Sign District. The review of an initial Sign District, or any amendment to an approved Sign District, shall not consider the content or message of any proposed signs.

(a) The area of the proposed "SN" Sign District comprises an existing or future district with a unique regional identity that serves or will serve as a regional destination or hub of commerce, culture, entertainment, or international transport; and

(b) The area of the proposed "SN" Sign District possesses a unique quality, theme or character, or zoning regulations have been or are being established that are intended to create a unique quality, theme or character; and

(c) The proposed signs include special design or architectural attributes that support the maintenance or creation of the "SN" Sign District's unique quality, theme or character; and

(d) The proposed design or architectural attributes of the proposed signage are compatible with the surrounding environment. Compatibility shall be determined by the relationships of the elements of form, proportion, scale, color, materials, surface treatment, overall sign size and the size and style of lettering. The surrounding environment shall be comprised of other nearby signs, other elements of street and site furniture, and adjacent properties; and

(e) If the Sign District provides an exception to the citywide ban on off-site signs or other provision of the citywide sign regulations, the ban or other provision will continue to directly advance the purposes of aesthetics and traffic safety despite the exception; and

(f) Any aesthetic or traffic safety harm resulting from allowing signs that would otherwise be prohibited or restricted by the citywide ban on off-site signs or other provision of the citywide sign regulations, is outweighed by the elimination of blight, or the improvement of aesthetics or traffic safety, resulting from development within the Sign District.

5. The total acreage in an "SN" Sign District shall include contiguous parcels of land, which may only be separated by public streets, ways, alleys or other physical features. Precise boundaries are required at the time of application for or initiation of an individual district.

**C. Sign Reduction.** If the ordinance establishing the "SN" Sign District allows off-site signs, as otherwise prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C 9 of this Code, then the ordinance shall:

1. Identify the boundaries of a "sign impact area," which shall have at least one boundary adjacent to the "SN" Sign District.
2. Require, at a minimum, that every square foot of sign area of a new off-site sign must be offset by a reduction of more than one square foot of existing off-site sign area, within either the "SN" Sign District or the "sign impact area."
3. Require that any application for reduction of off-site sign area include the notarized signature of the owner of the property on which the sign is located.
4. Credits for removal of off-site signs shall be awarded to the property owner. Such credits can then be used to acquire rights to establish new off-site signage.

The sign reduction requirement established by this subsection shall only be met through the demolition of existing, legally permitted off-site signs, including nonconforming off-site signs. The reduction in existing sign area shall be accomplished prior to issuance of a building permit for the new off-site sign. The applicant shall obtain the required demolition permits from the Department of Building and Safety prior to any demolition work.

**D. Sign Regulations.** The ordinance establishing the "SN" Sign District may be less restrictive or more restrictive than the sign regulations set forth in Article 4.4 of this chapter, and as such may allow signs prohibited by that article; but may not be less restrictive than Article 7 of Chapter 5 of this Code. If all or a portion of a defined geographic area is governed by both a specific plan and an "SN" Sign District, the "SN" Sign District regulations applicable to that area shall not conflict with or supersede the specific plan's special sign regulations applicable to the same area. An "SN" Sign District may only authorize sign types defined in Section 14.4.2 of this Code.

**E. Conformance.** The Department of Building and Safety shall not issue a building permit for a sign within a "SN" Sign District unless the sign conforms to the regulations set forth in a specific "SN" Sign District ordinance.

**F. Administration.**

1. The procedures to administer an "SN" Sign District shall be the specific plan procedures set forth in Section 11.5.7 of this Code, except that the findings for a Specific Plan Exception for signage shall be the same as the findings for a Sign Variance, the findings for a Project Permit Adjustment for



signage shall be the same as the findings for a Sign Adjustment, and the findings for Project Permit Compliance Review for signage shall be as follows:

a. All proposed signage complies with the applicable regulations of this Sign District.

b. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, the project incorporates mitigation measures, monitoring measures when necessary, or alternatives identified in the environmental review which would mitigate the negative environmental effects of the project, to the extent physically feasible.

2. For any signage request within a Sign District as identified in Paragraph 1 of this Subsection, the following additional finding shall be used solely to condition an approval and shall not be used to deny a project:

a. All existing and proposed signs are appropriately scaled to the architectural character of all buildings and structures on the lot.

b. All existing and proposed signs result in a complementary enhancement to the architecture on the lot.

c. All existing and proposed signs result in a visually uncluttered appearance.

Sec. 12. Article 4.4 of Chapter I of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

## **ARTICLE 4.4**

### **SIGN REGULATIONS**

Section	
14.4.1	Purpose
14.4.2	Definitions
14.4.3	Application
14.4.4	General Provisions
14.4.5	Freeway Exposure
14.4.6	Information Signs
14.4.7	Monument Signs
14.4.8	Projecting Signs
14.4.9	Wall Signs
14.4.10	Illuminated Architectural Canopy Signs
14.4.11	Pole Signs

- 14.4.12 Roof Signs
- 14.4.13 Window Signs
- 14.4.14 Marquee Signs
- 14.4.15 Temporary Signs
- 14.4.16 Temporary Signs on Temporary Construction Walls
- 14.4.17 Off-Site Signs
- 14.4.18 Awning Signs
- 14.4.19 Digital Displays
- 14.4.20 Vintage Art Murals
- 14.4.21 Signs in A and R Zones
- 14.4.22 Sign Adjustments
- 14.4.23 Sign Variances
- 14.4.24 Comprehensive Sign Programs
- 14.4.25 Continuation of Nonconforming Signs
- 14.4.26 Violations and Civil Penalties
- 14.4.27 Recovery of Costs

**SEC. 14.4.1. PURPOSE.**

The purpose of this article is to promote public safety and welfare by regulating signs in keeping with the following objectives:

- A. That the design, construction, installation, repair and maintenance of signs will not interfere with traffic safety or otherwise endanger public safety.
- B. That the regulations will provide reasonable protection to the visual environment by controlling the size, height, spacing and location of signs.
- C. That both the public and sign users will benefit from signs having improved legibility, readability and visibility.
- D. That consideration will be given to equalizing the opportunity for messages to be displayed.
- E. That adequacy of message opportunity will be available to sign users without dominating the visual appearance of the area.
- F. That the regulations will conform to judicial decisions, thereby limiting further costly litigation and facilitating enforcement of these regulations.

**SEC. 14.4.2. DEFINITIONS.**

The definitions of the following terms shall apply to this article. Other terms used in this article shall have the meanings set forth in Section 12.03 of this Code, if defined in that section.

**Aerial View Sign.** A sign that is applied or placed upon the roof surface, approximately parallel with the roof plane, intended to be viewed from the sky.

**Architectural Ledge Sign.** A wall sign with individual channel letters and/or a pre-fabricated image, attached to a horizontal projection forming a narrow shelf on a wall or architectural projection.

**Awning Sign.** A sign displayed on a canopy that projects over a deck, door, or window of a building.

**Bisecting Line.** A line that equally divides the angle created by the projection of intersecting lot lines of a lot adjoining the street of a corner lot as illustrated in Diagram C of this article.

**Building Face.** The general outer surface, not including cornices, bay windows or architectural projections, of any exterior wall of a building.

**Building Frontage.** The projection of the exterior building walls upon the street used for street frontage, as measured perpendicular to the edge of the street.

**Building Line.** A line established on a property as defined in Section 91.202 of this Code.

**Can Sign.** A wall sign whose text, logos and/or symbols are placed on the plastic face of an enclosed cabinet.

**Channel Letters.** Individually cut letters, numbers or figures, illuminated or non-illuminated, affixed to a building or structure.

**Digital Display.** A sign face, building face, and/or any building or structural component that displays still images, scrolling images, moving images, or flashing images, including video and animation, through the use of grid lights, cathode ray projections, light emitting diode displays, plasma screens, liquid crystal displays, fiber optics, or other electronic media or technology that is either independent of or attached to, integrated into, or projected onto a building or structural component, and that may be changed remotely through electronic means.

**Donor Sign.** A sign that recognizes a donor to the establishment located on the property where the sign is located.

**Exterior Sign.** A sign that is displayed on any exterior surface of a building or structure or is otherwise outdoors.

**Freeway.** A highway in respect to which the owners or those in possession of abutting lands have no right or easement of access to or from their abutting lands or in respect to which the owners have only limited or restricted right or easement of access, and which is declared to be a freeway, in compliance with the Streets and Highways Code of the State of California.

**Hanging Sign.** A wall sign with individual channel letters and/or a prefabricated image that is suspended from a horizontal architectural ledge or projection, or from the ceiling of an architectural recess.

**Identification Sign.** A wall sign that is limited to a company logo, generic type of business, or the name of a business or building.

**Illuminated Architectural Canopy Sign.** An enclosed illuminated canopy listed in accordance with the National Electrical Code that is attached to the wall of a building with the face of the sign approximately parallel to the wall and with the message integrated into its surface.

**Inflatable Device.** A sign that is a cold air inflated object, which may be of various shapes, made of flexible fabric, resting on the ground or structure and equipped with a portable blower motor that provides a constant flow of air into the device. Inflatable devices are restrained, attached, or held in place by a cord, rope, cable or similar method. The term inflatable device shall not include any object that contains helium, hot air or a lighter-than-air substance.

**Information Sign.** A sign that is limited to a message giving directions, instructions, menus, selections or address numerals.

**Main Traveled Roadway of a Freeway.** The portion of a freeway, including interchange roadways connecting one freeway with another, which is designed for the movement of large volumes of vehicular traffic, efficiently and safely at high speed, but not including service roadways, landscape areas, or ingress or egress ramps connecting the freeway with other streets.

**Marquee Sign.** A sign displayed on a roof-like structure that projects over the entrance to a building or structure.

**Monument Sign.** A freestanding sign that is erected directly upon the existing or artificially created grade, or that is raised no more than 12 inches from the existing or artificially created grade to the bottom of the sign, and that has a horizontal dimension equal to or greater than its vertical dimension.

**Off-Site Sign.** A sign that is not used to advertise business conducted, services rendered or goods produced or sold on the lot upon which the sign is placed.

**On-Site Sign.** A sign that is used exclusively to advertise business conducted or services rendered or goods produced or sold on the lot upon which the sign is placed.

**Perpendicular Line.** A straight line between the point on a sign face that is closest to the street and the point where the line intersects the street lot line at a 90 degree angle, as illustrated in Diagram C of this article.

**Pole Sign.** A freestanding sign that is erected or affixed to one or more poles or posts and that does not meet the requirements of a monument sign.

**Projecting Sign.** A sign, other than a wall sign, that is attached to a building and projects outward from the building with one or more sign faces approximately perpendicular to the face of the building.

**Projection.** The distance by which a sign extends beyond the building face.

**Roof Sign.** A sign erected upon a roof of a building.

**Sign.** Any whole or part of a display board, wall, screen or object, used to announce, declare, demonstrate, display or otherwise present a message and attract the attention of the public.

**Sign Area.** An area circumscribed by the smallest geometric shape created with a maximum of eight straight lines, which will enclose all words, letters, figures, symbols, designs and pictures, together with all framing, background material, colored or illuminated areas and attention-attracting devices, forming an integral part of an individual message except that:

1. Wall signs having no discernible boundary shall have the areas between letters, words intended to be read together and any device intended to draw attention to the sign message included in any computation of surface area.

2. For spherical, cylindrical or other three-dimensional signs the area of the sign shall be computed from the smallest two-dimensional geometrical shape or shapes, which will best approximate the greatest actual surface area visible from any one direction.

**Sign Face.** The surface upon which the sign message is placed.

**Sign Support Structure.** A structure of any kind or character, erected, used or maintained for a sign upon which any poster, bill, printing, painting, projected image or other message may be placed.

**Street Frontage.** The length of a line separating a lot from one street.

**Temporary Construction Wall.** A wooden fence or wooden barrier that provides protection for pedestrians and is erected and maintained on the perimeter of a construction or demolition site pursuant to Section 3303 and 3306 of the California Building Code (CBC).

**Temporary Sign.** Any sign that is to be maintained for a limited duration, including paper signs and other signs that are not permanently affixed to the ground or building.

**Wall Sign.** A sign on the wall of a building or structure, with the exposed face of the sign in a plane approximately parallel to the plane of the wall, that has been attached to, painted on, or erected against the wall; projected onto the wall; or printed on any material which is supported and attached to the wall by an adhesive or other materials or methods.

**Window.** An operable or inoperable opening constructed in a wall or roof that admits light or air to an enclosure and is often framed and spanned with glass or other translucent material.

**Window Sign.** A sign that is attached to, affixed to, leaning against, or otherwise placed within six feet of a window or door in a manner so that the sign is visible from outside the building. The term window sign shall not include the display of merchandise in a store window.

### **SEC. 14.4.3. APPLICATION.**

A. **Scope.** All exterior signs and sign support structures not located entirely in the public right-of-way shall conform to the requirements of this article and all other applicable provisions of this Code, to include Article 7 of Chapter 5 of this Code.

**EXCEPTION:** Signs or sign support structures shall not be considered exterior if they face an interior court bounded on all sides by one or more non-translucent buildings or walls on the property, and no sign is higher than any of the surrounding buildings or walls or is visible from any public right of way or adjacent property.

B. **On-Site Signs.** Information signs, monument signs, projecting signs, wall signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, pole signs (not including pole signs permitted by Section 14.4.17 of this article), window signs, marquee signs and awning signs may only display on-site or noncommercial messages. The following provisions of this Code, as applicable, shall apply to on-site signs: Sections 14.4.4; 14.4.5; 14.4.6; 14.4.7; 14.4.8; 14.4.9; 14.4.10; 14.4.11; 14.4.12; 14.4.13; 14.4.14; 14.4.18; 14.4.19; 14.4.20; 14.4.21; 14.4.22; 14.4.23; 14.4.24; 14.4.25; 14.4.26; 14.4.27; 91.6205; 91.6207; and 91.6216.

**C. Off-Site Signs.** Pole signs conforming to the regulations set forth in Section 14.4.18 of this article and other legally existing non-conforming off-site wall and off-site roof signs may display off-site or noncommercial messages. The following provisions of this Code, as applicable, shall apply to off-site signs: Sections 14.4.4; 14.4.5; 14.4.17; 14.4.25; 14.4.26; 14.4.27; 91.6205; 91.6206; and 91.6207.

**D. Temporary Signs.** Temporary signs may display off-site, on-site or noncommercial messages. The provisions of the following sections of this Code, as applicable, shall apply to temporary signs: Sections 14.4.4; 14.4.5; 14.4.15; 14.4.16; 14.4.21; 14.4.24; 14.4.26; 14.4.27; 91.6205; and 91.6207.

**E. Zones.**

1. Signs are allowed on any lot in the A1, A2, RA, RE, RS, R1, RU, RZ, RW1, R2, RD, RMP, RW2, R3, R4 or R5 zones, provided that these signs comply with the provisions of the following sections of this article, as applicable: Sections 14.4.4; 14.4.5; 14.4.6; 14.4.9; 14.4.11; 14.4.15; 14.4.16; 14.4.18; 14.4.21 and 14.4.25.

2. Signs are allowed on any lot in a RAS or other A or R zone where C or M uses are permitted by right; on any lot in an A or R zone where the use was permitted pursuant to Section 12.24 or Section 12.27 of this Code; and on any lot in the C, M, OS, PF or SL zones; provided that these signs comply with the requirements of the zone and with the provisions of the following sections of this article, as applicable: Sections 14.4.4; 14.4.5; 14.4.6; 14.4.7, 14.4.8, 14.4.9; 14.4.10, 14.4.11; 14.4.12, 14.4.13, 14.4.14; 14.4.15; 14.4.16; 14.4.18; 14.4.19; 14.4.20; and 14.4.25.

3. Signs are allowed on any lot in the P and PB zones, provided that these signs comply with all applicable provisions of this article and Section 12.12.1 of this Code.

4. A sign located on a lot comprised of two or more zones shall be regulated by the provisions of this article applicable to the zone where the sign is located.

**F. Relationship to Other Provisions of this Code.** If the provisions of this article are different from, more restrictive than or more permissive than any other provisions of this Code related to signs, then the provisions of this article shall prevail and supersede those provisions.

**SEC. 14.4.4. GENERAL PROVISIONS.**

**A. Authorized Signs.** Only the signs defined in and regulated by this article and no others are allowed. It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, construct, install, enlarge, alter, repair, move, remove, convert, demolish, use or maintain any sign or sign

support structure, or cause or permit those actions to be done, in violation of any of the provisions of this article.

**B. Ideological and Political Signs.** No provision of this article shall prohibit an ideological, political or other noncommercial message on a sign otherwise allowed by this article.

**C. Prohibited Signs.** Signs are prohibited if they:

1. Contain obscene matters, as defined in Section 311 of the Penal Code of the State of California.
2. Contain or consist of posters, pennants, banners, ribbons, streamers, spinners, or similar devices, except as permitted by Sections 14.4.15 and 14.4.16 of this article.
3. Contain flashing, mechanical and strobe lights in conflict with the provisions of Sections 80.08.4 and 93.0107 of this Code.
4. Are revolving and where all or any portion rotate at greater than six revolutions per minute.
5. Are tacked, pasted or otherwise temporarily affixed on the walls of buildings, barns, sheds, trees, poles, posts or fences, except as permitted by Sections 14.4.15 and 14.4.16 of this article.
6. Are affixed to any vehicle or trailer on private property if the vehicle or trailer is not otherwise used in the business and the sole purpose of attaching the sign to the vehicle or trailer is to attract people to a place of business.
7. Emit audible sounds, odor or visible matter.
8. Use human beings, live animals, animated figures, motion pictures, or continuous motion in connection with any sign.
9. Are off-site signs, including off-site digital displays, except when off-site signs are specifically permitted pursuant to a Sign District, a Comprehensive Sign Program, or a relocation agreement entered into pursuant to California Business and Professions Code Section 5412. This prohibition shall also apply to alterations, enlargements or conversions to digital displays of legally existing off-site signs, except for alterations that conform to the provisions of Section 91.6216 and all other requirements of this Code.
10. Are inflatable devices.

**D. Prohibited Locations.**



1. No sign or sign support structure shall project into any public alley, except that a sign or sign support structure above a height of 14 feet may project no more than six inches into a public alley.

2. No sign or sign support structure shall be located less than six feet horizontally or 12 feet vertically from overhead electrical conductors, which are energized in excess of 750 volts. The term "**overhead electrical conductors**" as used here shall mean any electrical conductor, either bare or insulated, installed above ground, except electrical conductors that are enclosed in iron pipe or other material covering of equal strength. Arcs of six foot radius may be used to define corners of prohibition area.

3. No sign or sign support structure shall be erected in a visibility triangle as defined by Sections 12.21 C 7 and 62.200 of this Code.

4. No sign or sign support structure shall be located within two feet of the curb or edge of any roadway, as measured horizontally.

5. Under no circumstances shall a sign obstruct the free operation of a door or window, or ingress or egress through a door or window.

#### **E. Maintenance.**

1. **Appearance.** Every sign shall be maintained in a clean, safe and good working condition, including the replacement of defective parts, defaced or broken faces, lighting and other acts required for the maintenance of the sign. The display surfaces shall be kept neatly painted or posted and free of graffiti at all times.

2. **Debris Removal.** The base of any sign erected on the ground shall be kept clear of weeds, rubbish or other combustible material at all times.

3. **Abandoned Signage.** Ninety days after the cessation of a business activity, service or product, the related signs shall be removed, or the face of the signs shall be removed and replaced with blank panels or shall be painted out.

F. **Sign Illumination Limitations.** No sign shall be arranged and illuminated in a manner that will produce a light intensity of greater than 0.3 foot candles above ambient lighting, as measured at the property line of the nearest residentially zoned property.

G. **Combination Signs.** A sign, which is subject to more than one classification, shall meet the requirements for the classification to which each portion is subject.

**H. Flag Lots.** For purposes of this article, flag lots containing less than 50 feet of street frontage shall be allotted 50 feet of street frontage for the purpose of determining the type of sign permitted and for the allowable sign area.

**I. Street Address Numbers.** No sign shall be maintained on any property unless the street address of the property is maintained in accordance with the provisions of Section 63.113 of this Code.

**J. Sign Permit Priority Status.**

1. To maintain location, area, frontage, or spacing status, signs must be installed within six months of issuance of a building permit or prior to expiration of any permit extension granted by the Department of Building and Safety.

2. Where more than one permit has been issued and the effect of those permits when considered together results in a violation of this article, all permits except the permit with the earlier date and time of issuance shall be invalid.

**K. Lots With Multiple Street Frontages.** If a lot is a corner lot or other lot with two or more street frontages then the following regulations shall apply:

1. A freestanding sign shall be considered to be located along a particular street if the sign and its support structure are located entirely on the side of the bisecting line closest to that street, and the sign face is placed at the same angle as the perpendicular line or at an angle not to exceed 20 degrees from either side of the perpendicular line as shown on Diagram C of this article.

2. On a through lot, a freestanding sign shall be considered to be located along a particular street if the sign and its support structure are located entirely on that half of the lot closest to the lot line adjoining that street.

**L. Sign Height.** The height of all signs permitted by this article shall be measured as the distance in a straight vertical line from the top of the sign to the sidewalk grade or edge of roadway grade nearest the sign. No sign may be located at a height that exceeds the height limit above grade established by any land use ordinance, including the height limit established for the underlying zone or height district.

**M. Relief.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 12.24, 12.27, 12.28 or any other section of this Code, no relief from the sign regulations set forth in this article shall be granted, except as provided by Sections 14.4.22, 14.4.23 and 14.4.24 of this article.

**EXCEPTION:** Relief for on-site signs for which plans are submitted pursuant to the procedures set forth in Sections 12.24 M and 12.27 U of this chapter may be approved, and a building permit may be issued provided that the conditional use permit or variance was granted before the effective date of this

ordinance, is still valid, and specifically authorized on-site signs or otherwise provided relief from the sign regulations.

**N. Replacement of Signs on Historic Buildings.** Signs on historic buildings may be reconstructed or re-created if the Department of City Planning's Office of Historic Resources determines that sufficient photographic documentation or a building permit has been submitted to prove that a historic sign once existed at that location, and that the reconstructed or re-created sign will enhance the historic nature of the building or historic district and comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. For the purposes of this section, a "historic building" shall be defined as a building that is a City-designated Historic-Cultural Monument, is listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources, or is a Contributor in an established Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

#### **SEC. 14.4.5. FREEWAY EXPOSURE.**

**A. New Signs.** No person shall erect, construct, install, paint, maintain, and no building or electrical permit shall be issued for, any sign or sign support structure within 2,000 feet of a freeway unless the Department of Building and Safety has first determined that the sign is only incidentally viewable from a main traveled roadway of a freeway or an on-ramp/off-ramp. However, at the termination of an off-ramp, any wall sign located along the front line may be fully and clearly viewable from the off-ramp.

**B. Exemption.** The wall signs specified in Subdivisions 1 and 2 below are exempt from the limitation of Subsection A above. These signs shall not have moving parts or any arrangement of lights that create the illusion of movement.

1. Identification signs identifying the building where the sign is located, providing the area of the sign is not more than 50 square feet or is not larger than five percent of the area of the side of the building, which faces primarily to the freeway, whichever is greater; and

2. Wall signs on which the advertising is limited to the name of any person, firm or corporation occupying the building, or the type of business, services rendered, or the name of any product manufactured or sold on the premises. The total area of all wall signs on a building permitted in this subdivision shall not exceed 100 square feet. Anyone sign shall not exceed 50 square feet in area.

#### **SEC. 14.4.6. INFORMATION SIGNS.**

**A. Area.** Information signs shall not exceed 25 square feet in area.

**B. Height.** No information sign shall exceed a height of six feet six inches.

#### **SEC. 14.4.7. MONUMENT SIGNS.**

**A. Area.**

1. The sign area of monument signs shall not exceed 1.5 square feet per foot of street frontage on which the signs are located nor a maximum of 75 square feet for the sign face visible to the same direction of traffic.

2. The combined sign area of monument signs, projecting signs, wall signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, pole signs, roof signs and window signs shall not exceed four square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

**B. Height.** Monument signs shall be limited to a maximum overall height of eight feet above sidewalk grade or edge of roadway grade nearest the sign.

**C. Location.** Monument signs shall be located at least 7.5 feet from interior lot lines and at least 15 feet from any other monument sign, projecting sign or pole sign. The location of monument signs shall not interfere or present a hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

**D. Shape.** Monument signs shall have a horizontal dimension equal to or greater than their vertical dimension.

**E. Projection.** Monument signs shall not project over the roof of a building or over the building line.

**SEC. 14.4.8. PROJECTING SIGNS.**

**A. Permitted.** Projecting signs shall not be permitted on a lot having less than 50 feet of street frontage. Lots having a street frontage of at least 50 feet may have a projecting sign for each 200 feet of street frontage or fraction thereof. Projecting signs shall not be permitted for mini-shopping centers and commercial corners unless a Sign Adjustment is granted.

**B. Area.**

1. The sign area of projecting signs visible to the same direction of traffic shall not exceed 25 square feet plus 1.5 square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, up to a maximum sign area of 300 square feet. Any projecting sign located at the street corner of a corner lot may use the greater street frontage in computing area limitations.

2. The combined sign area of projecting signs, wall signs, monument signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, pole signs, roof signs and window signs shall not exceed four square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

**C. Height.** A projecting sign shall not be located lower than eight feet above sidewalk grade or edge of roadway grade nearest the sign and shall not extend above the top of the wall.

**D. Location.**

1. A projecting sign shall be located at least 7.5 feet from any interior lot line.
2. A projecting sign shall be located at least 15 feet from any other projecting sign, monument sign or pole sign.
3. The plane of the sign face of a projecting sign shall be within 15 degrees of being perpendicular to the face of the building, except at the corner of the building.

**E. Projection.** A projecting sign may project over the building line, but shall not extend beyond the limits shown in Diagram A of this article. Sign projections shall fall within an area that is perpendicular to the building line and has a width of three feet as measured parallel with the building line. In no event, may a projecting sign project more than eight feet from the face of a building.

**EXCEPTION:** For projecting signs located above a 16-foot height and on a lot having a street frontage greater than 50 feet, projections over the building line may vary linearly from five feet at 50 feet to eight feet at 100 feet of street frontage.

**SEC. 14.4.9. WALL SIGNS.**

**A. Area.**

1. The total sign area of wall signs facing a street shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, plus one square foot for each foot of building frontage along the same street, for a single-story building.
2. For buildings more than one story in height, the combined wall sign area shall not exceed that permitted for a single story by more than ten percent for each additional story. In no event, shall the combined wall sign area exceed by 50 percent that area permitted for a single-story building.
3. For wall signs that are made up of individual letters that use the wall of the building as background, the allowable sign area may be increased by 20 percent, provided there is no change in color between the background and the surrounding wall area.

4. The combined sign area of illuminated architectural canopy signs, roof signs and wall signs facing the same direction shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, plus one square foot for each foot of building frontage along the same street.

5. The combined sign area of wall signs, projecting signs, monument signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, pole signs, roof signs and window signs shall not exceed four square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

**B. Height.** A wall sign shall not extend above the top of the wall of the building.

**EXCEPTION:** Where there is less than three feet between the top of the wall and the top of a window, the wall sign may extend above the top of the wall by a maximum of three feet.

**C. Location.**

1. No wall sign shall be located on a wall that faces and is within five feet of an interior lot line.

2. Wall signs installed on a wall that faces the rear lot line and that is located within 30 feet of property that is zoned R-3 or more restrictive shall not be illuminated.

3. No wall sign shall be placed over the exterior surface of any opening of a building, including its windows, doors, and vents.

4. No wall sign shall cross the perimeter of any opening of a building, including its windows, doors, and vents, at any point 24 inches or less of the exterior building face measured perpendicularly to the surface of the opening.

**D. Projection.**

1. No wall sign shall have a projection over any public street, other public property or building line greater than that permitted in Diagram A of this article.

2. No wall sign shall project more than 24 inches from the face of the building. If any message is placed on the edge of a wall sign, then that portion of the wall sign shall be regulated as a projecting sign.

**E. High Rise Signs.** Any wall signs located over 100 feet above grade shall be used as identification signs only. Identification signs shall comprise no more than 80 percent of the width of that portion of the building where the signs are attached. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection A. above, the area of these signs may

constitute up to five percent of the area of the wall where the signs are attached and may be in addition to the area permitted in Subsection A. above.

**F. Parking Lots.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 14.4.4 C 5 of this article, where a parking lot exists between a wall sign and the street, and there is a fence or freestanding wall between the parking lot and the street, a portion of the total sign area permitted by this section may be used on the fence or freestanding wall located between the parking lot and the street so long as the sign does not project beyond the lot line. The sign shall be restricted to that portion of the fence or freestanding wall between two feet six inches and three feet six inches in height above the finished grade at the base of the fence or freestanding wall generally facing the street.

#### **SEC. 14.4.10. ILLUMINATED ARCHITECTURAL CANOPY SIGNS.**

##### **A. Area.**

1. The area of illuminated architectural canopy signs shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, plus one square foot for each foot of building frontage along the same street.

2. In applying sign area limits, only the area occupied by the message of the illuminated architectural canopy signs will be used.

3. The combined sign area of illuminated architectural canopy signs, roof signs and wall signs facing the same direction shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, plus one square foot for each foot of building frontage along the same street.

4. The combined sign area of illuminated architectural canopy signs, projecting signs, monument signs, wall signs, pole signs, roof signs and window signs shall not exceed four square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

**B. Height.** An illuminated architectural canopy sign shall not extend above the top of the wall of the building on which it is located.

**C. Clearance.** Illuminated architectural canopy signs shall have a minimum clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk grade or edge of roadway grade nearest the sign and shall not be located closer than two feet from the curb of any roadway, as measured horizontally.

**D. Emergency Personnel Access.** Illuminated architectural canopy signs shall not occupy a four-foot distance along the exterior wall at one corner of the building's street frontage and an additional four-foot distance along every 50 feet of the building frontage.

**E. Illumination.** The sign shall be internally illuminated so as to illuminate the canopy and the exterior wall below. The illuminated architectural canopy sign shall bear the electric sign label of an approved testing agency with a re-inspection service.

**F. Projection.** Illuminated architectural canopy signs may project over a building line. However, in no event may an illuminated architectural canopy sign project more than three feet from the face of the building.

#### **SEC. 14.4.11. POLE SIGNS.**

**A. Permitted.** Pole signs shall not be permitted on that portion of a lot having less than 50 feet of street frontage. Lots having a street frontage of at least 50 feet may have a pole sign for each 200 feet of street frontage or fraction thereof. Pole signs shall not be permitted for mini-shopping centers and commercial corners unless a Sign Adjustment is granted.

##### **B. Area.**

1. Pole sign area visible to the same direction of traffic shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, plus one square foot for each foot of building frontage along the same street.

2. The maximum area of any one pole sign shall not exceed 400 square feet.

3. Any pole sign that is located at the street corner of a corner lot may use the greater street frontage for area limitations.

4. The combined sign area of pole signs, projecting signs, monument signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, wall signs, roof signs and window signs shall not exceed four square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

**C. Height.** Height shall be measured from the nearest sidewalk or edge of roadway grade to the top of the sign. The overall height limitation shall be determined by street frontage as follows:

1. 25 feet for lots having 50 feet of street frontage;

2. 35 feet for lots having more than 50 feet and less than 100 feet of street frontage; and

3. 42 feet for lots having at least 100 feet of street frontage.



Any pole sign that is located at the street corner of a corner lot may use the greater street frontage for determining height limitations. In no event shall a sign exceed the height specified for the height district in which the sign is located.

**D. Location.**

1. Pole signs shall be located at least ten feet from interior lot lines; however, on corner lots and flag lots, pole signs may be located no less than five feet from interior lot lines.

2. A pole sign shall be located at least 15 feet from any other pole sign, projecting sign or monument sign.

3. Pole signs shall be located so as not to interfere or present a hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

4. Notwithstanding the requirements of Subsection F of this Section, where the lower part of a pole sign is less than eight feet above sidewalk grade or the edge of roadway grade nearest the sign, the sign shall extend to grade or shall be installed in a planter that extends beyond the edges of the sign and sign support structure and that is a minimum of 18 inches in height.

**E. Projection.** A pole sign may project over a building line, but shall not extend beyond the limits shown in Diagram A of this article. Sign projections shall fall within an area that is perpendicular to the building line and has a width of three feet as measured parallel to the building line.

**F. Other Requirements.** A maximum of two poles shall be permitted for any pole sign. The maximum cross-sectional dimension of a pole shall not exceed ten percent of the overall height of the sign.

**SEC. 14.4.12. ROOF SIGNS.**

**A. Permitted.** Roof signs shall be permitted only when placed directly upon a roof that slopes downward toward and extends to or over the top of an exterior wall. Roof signs shall not be permitted for mini-shopping centers and commercial corners unless a Sign Adjustment is granted.

**B. Area.**

1. Roof sign area shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, plus one square foot for each foot of building frontage along the same street.

2. The maximum area of any one roof sign shall not exceed 300 square feet.

3. The combined area of roof signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs and wall signs facing the same direction shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, plus one square foot for each foot of building frontage along the same street.

4. The combined sign area of wall signs, projecting signs, monument signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, pole signs, roof signs and window signs shall not exceed four square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

**C. Height.** The top of the roof sign shall be located at least two feet below the ridge of the roof.

**D. Location.**

1. Roof signs shall be located at least ten feet from interior lot lines.

2. Roof signs shall be located at least two feet from the edge of the roof.

3. The plane of the sign face of a roof sign shall be approximately parallel to the face of the building.

**SEC. 14.4.13. WINDOW SIGNS.**

**A. Area.** The total area of all window signs shall not exceed ten percent of the area of the window.

**B. Combined Area.** The combined sign area of wall signs, projecting signs, monument signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, pole signs, roof signs and window signs shall not exceed four square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

**SEC. 14.4.14. MARQUEE SIGNS.**

**A. General Requirements.** Marquee signs shall comply with the requirements set forth in Sections 14.4.3 A; 14.4.4 B; 91.3106, 91.3106.1 91.6205; and 91.6207 of this Code.

**B. Location.** Signs shall not be attached to any portion of the marquee except on the periphery. Wall signs on the periphery of a marquee shall not extend above or below the periphery of the marquee. Signs shall not be extended above nor suspended below the exterior periphery of a marquee sign.

**SEC. 14.4.15. TEMPORARY SIGNS.**

**A. General Requirements.** No temporary sign shall also be an off-site sign, except for temporary signs on temporary construction walls.

**B. Permit Required.** Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, a building permit shall be required for a temporary sign, pennant, banner, ribbon, streamer or spinner. The permit application shall specify the dates being requested for authorized installation and the proposed location.

**EXCEPTION:** Pursuant to Section 91.6201.2.1a of this Code, no building permit shall be required for a temporary sign, pennant, banner, ribbon streamer or spinner that contains a political, ideological or other noncommercial message, or that, pursuant to Section 91.101.5 of this Code, contains less than 20 square feet of sign area.

**B. Area.**

1. The combined sign area of temporary signs shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

2. The combined sign area of temporary signs, when placed upon a window and any other window signs shall not exceed a maximum of ten percent of the window area.

**C. Time Limit.** Temporary signs shall be removed within 30 days of installation and shall not be reinstalled for a period of 30 days of the date of removal of the previous sign. The installation of temporary signs shall not exceed a total of 90 days in any calendar year.

**EXCEPTION:** Temporary signs that do not require a building permit may be installed for a period of greater than 30 days, provided that such signs shall not exceed a total of 90 days in any calendar year.

**D. Location.** Temporary signs may be allowed on fences, on the interior surface of windows and doors, and at any location where any permanent sign of any type is allowed by this article. Pennants, ribbons, streamers or spinners are allowed between light standards on private property.

**E. Construction.** Temporary signs may contain or consist of posters, pennants, ribbons, streamers or spinners. Temporary signs may be made of paper or any other material. If the temporary sign is made of cloth, it shall be flame retardant when the aggregate area exceeds 100 square feet. Every temporary sign shall be supported and attached with stranded cable of 1/16-inch minimum diameter or by other methods as approved by the Department of Building and Safety.

**SEC. 14.4.16. TEMPORARY SIGNS ON TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION WALLS.**

**A. Permit Required.** A building permit shall be required for a temporary sign on a temporary construction wall. Temporary signs on temporary construction walls shall comply with the construction requirements of Section 14.4.15 E of this article. For purposes of this section, the term “applicant” shall mean the owner of the sign company or, if there is no sign company, the owner of the property.

**B. Area.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 14.4.15 B 1 and 2 of this article, signs placed on temporary construction walls, and/or solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots pursuant to the terms of this section shall not extend above the top of the wall or fence and shall comply with the following:

1. The combined sign area of temporary signs shall not exceed eight square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located.

2. Individual signs shall not exceed a sign area of 250 square feet.

3. Signs may be grouped to form a maximum sign area of 250 square feet.

4. Signs or groups of signs having an area of 250 square feet shall be separated from any other sign on the temporary construction walls and/or solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots by at least ten feet measured horizontally, except that information signs governed by paragraph 8 of subsection F of this section may be placed within such ten-foot spaces.

**C. Time Limit.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 14.4.15 C of this article, signs placed on temporary construction walls, and/or solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots pursuant to the terms of this section shall be allowed to remain for as long as the building permits associated with the construction site remain in effect or for a period of two years, whichever is less. Building permits for signs on solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots, which are not construction sites, shall be issued for a time period not to exceed one year. The Department of Building and Safety shall grant a new building permit for a period equal to the original building permit term upon the receipt of (i) an application for a new building permit, (ii) the payment of the building permit fee and (iii) a written statement from the Director of the Office of Community Beautification consenting to the new building permit.

**D. Height.** Signs may only be placed to a maximum height of eight feet.

**E. Location.** Temporary signs placed on the exterior surfaces of any temporary construction walls, and/or solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots are limited to lots located in the C or M zones.

**F. Special Requirements for Signs on Temporary Construction Walls, and/or Solid Wood Fences Surrounding Vacant Lots.**

**1. Review by the Office of Community Beautification.** At any time after the issuance of a building permit under this section and upon request of the Council district office of the Council district in which the site or lot is located, the Office of Community Beautification of the Department of Public Works (Office of Community Beautification) shall investigate an area consisting of a 500-foot radius around the permitted site or lot to determine whether there exists a public nuisance due to the presence of graffiti and/or posters/handbills on light poles, utility poles, bus stops, and any other illegal postings on public property.

If the Office of Community Beautification cannot establish that the area constitutes a public nuisance because of the presence of graffiti, posters/handbills and any other illegal postings on public property within a 500-foot radius around the permitted site or lot, then the Office of Community Beautification shall expand the radius around the site or lot in 250-foot increments, up to a maximum radius of 1500-feet. If the Office of Community Beautification finds the existence of a public nuisance on public property within the expanded radius area beyond the original 500 foot radius, then it shall require the applicant to abate the public nuisance in the expanded radius area in accordance with Subdivision 3, below.

**2. Notification of Locations for Placement of Signs.** Within ten days after the issuance of the building permit, the applicant shall provide written notification to the Office of Community Beautification and the Council district office of the Council district in which the construction site or vacant lot is located. The notification shall contain the name and address of the applicant and the property address where the signs will be placed. The notification to the Office of Community Beautification shall include a copy of the applicant's contract with the property owner to post signs at the specified location.

**3. Nuisance Abatement.** It shall be the applicant's responsibility to clean and maintain free from graffiti public property and rights-of-way within an area consisting of a 500-foot radius or any expanded radius required by the Office of Community Beautification around the permitted site or lot. The applicant shall patrol the abatement area every 24 hours to search for graffiti and remove any graffiti within 24 hours of its discovery. The removal of graffiti shall include, but not be limited to, spray paint on walls, poles, and fences on public property. In addition, the applicant shall also be responsible for removing any posters/handbills on light poles, utility poles, bus stops, and any other illegal postings on public property. At the time of graffiti removal, the applicant shall also remove any trash, debris or rubbish from the public sidewalks within the abatement area around the permitted site. The Office of Community Beautification shall enforce the provisions of this subsection.

**4. Permit Revocation.** Any building permit issued pursuant to this section may be revoked by the Department of Building and Safety for any of the following reasons, provided a written and signed notification of the applicant's failure to comply with Paragraphs (a), (d), (e) or (f) of this subsection is sent to

the Department of Building and Safety by the Director of the Office of Community Beautification:

(a) Failure by the applicant to maintain the temporary construction wall and/or solid wood fence surrounding a vacant lot free from graffiti.

(b) Failure by the applicant to comply with the terms of the permit.

(c) Failure by the applicant to maintain the bond required in Subsection A of this section.

(d) Failure by the applicant to eradicate graffiti within a 500-foot radius or any expanded radius required by the Office of Community Beautification of the temporary construction wall, and/or solid wood fence surrounding a vacant lot within 24 hours of receiving notification of the presence of graffiti from the Office of Community Beautification or the Council staff in the Council district in which the construction site or vacant lot is located.

(e) Failure by the applicant to remove posters/handbills placed on light poles, utility poles, bus stops and any other illegal postings on public property within a 500-foot radius or any expanded radius required by the Office of Community Beautification of the temporary construction wall, and/or solid wood fence surrounding a vacant lot, within 24 hours of receiving notification of the presence of posters/handbills or other illegal postings from the Office of Community Beautification or the Council staff in the Council district in which the construction site or vacant lot is located.

(f) Failure by the applicant, at the time of graffiti removal, to remove trash, debris or rubbish from the public sidewalks within the abatement area around the permitted site.

**5. Removal of Signs.** If the Department of Building and Safety revokes the building permit allowing signs on temporary construction walls, and/or solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots, then any signs placed on the temporary construction walls and/or solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots shall be removed by the applicant within 72 hours after receipt of written notification.

**6. Public Nuisance.** Any signs remaining on temporary construction walls, and/or solid wood fences surrounding vacant lots after the building permit is revoked are deemed to be a public nuisance that can be abated by utilizing the procedure contained in Section 91.8904, et seq., of this Code.

**7. Office of Community Beautification.** The Office of Community Beautification is hereby designated the authorized representative of the City for the purpose of enforcing and implementing the provisions of Sections

91.8904.1.2 and 91.8307 of this Code to remove the nuisances described in this section.

**8. Information Sign.** Each temporary construction wall and/or solid wood fence surrounding vacant lots shall display an information sign that identifies the date the wall was erected or permitted, the address and telephone number of the person responsible for maintaining the property, the address and telephone number of the Office of Community Beautification. If the Office of Community Beautification maintains a graffiti hotline then this telephone number shall also be displayed on the information sign. The information sign shall conform with the requirements of Section 14.4.6 of this article, and may be located within the ten-foot spaces between signs on the temporary construction wall or solid wood fence.

#### **SEC. 14.4.17. OFF-SITE SIGNS.**

**A. Area.** The sign area of a single sign face shall not exceed 800 square feet.

**B. Height.**

1. The height to the top of the off-site sign shall be limited to a maximum of 42 feet above the sidewalk grade or edge of roadway grade nearest the sign, except that a sign that is more than 80 percent above a roof of a building may extend to the top of the sign a maximum of 30 feet above the surface of the roof under the sign.

2. In no event shall the height to the top of the off-site sign exceed a height greater the height allowed by the height district, specific plan, or zone in which the sign is located, or by any applicable land use ordinance, or a height of 60 feet above the sidewalk grade or edge of roadway grade nearest the sign, whichever is more restrictive.

3. The bottom of the off-site sign shall be at least eight feet above the sidewalk grade or edge of roadway grade nearest the sign.

**C. Location.**

1. No portion of an off-site sign with a sign area greater than 80 square feet shall be placed within 200 feet of a residentially zoned lot, which is located on the same side of the same street as the lot on which the sign is placed. However, where a lot has two or more street frontages, a sign may be located on that street frontage, which is not on the same street as the residentially zoned lot; provided the sign and sign support structure are placed in that half of the lot that is the farthest from the street frontage on which the residentially zoned lot is located.

2. No portion of an off-site sign or sign support structure shall be located in that half of a lot located farthest from the street frontage when residentially zoned property is located to the rear of that street frontage.

3. Off-site signs are not permitted along that portion of a lot having a street frontage of less than 50 feet.

4. No more than four off-site signs shall be located at the intersection of two or more streets when the off-site signs are located within 150 feet of the intersection of two street frontages.

5. An off-site sign face shall not be located within one foot of an interior lot line.

**D. Frontage Determination on Lots with Lot Lines Adjoining More Than One Street.**

1. An off-site sign shall be considered to be on a single street for purposes of Subsections C and E of this section if the sign and its support structure are located entirely on the side of the bisecting line closest to that street and the sign face is placed at the same angle as the perpendicular line or at an angle not to exceed 20 degrees from either side of the perpendicular line as shown on Diagram C of this article.

2. An off-site sign located on a through lot shall be located on a single street if the sign and its support structure are located entirely on that half of the lot closest to the lot line adjoining that street.

Any off-site sign not in conformance with either Subdivision 1 or 2 above shall be considered to be located on more than one street frontage.

**E. Spacing.**

1. An off-site sign, which is either single-faced or parallel double-faced, shall be spaced as specified in Table No. B of this article from any other existing or previously permitted off-site sign, which is single-faced or parallel double-faced. If an off-site sign is located within a California Department of Transportation jurisdiction area, then the spacing rules set forth in Section 5408 of the Business and Professions Code must be followed, but spacing shall not be less than what this article requires.

2. For any double-faced off-site sign, the spacing requirements shall be based on the area of the largest sign face.

3. For double-faced off-site signs whose faces are not parallel, the spacing between any proposed, permitted or existing off-site sign shall be determined by the following formula:



$$D = S \left[ 1 + \frac{(B - 5)}{90} \right]$$

WHERE:

D = required spacing between signs, in feet.

S = sign spacing determined from Table No. B below in feet.

B = widest edge separation of sign faces in feet.

4. Spacing shall be measured between off-site signs that are located on the same side of the same street. Spacing shall be measured from a line that is perpendicular to the building line and that passes through a point on the building line that is closest to the nearest sign face edge. Spacing shall be measured along the center line of the street.

**F. Double-faced Off-Site Signs.**

1. Off-site signs may be either single or double-faced.
2. For double-faced off-site signs whose faces are parallel, the distance between sign faces shall not exceed six feet.
3. For double-faced off-site signs whose faces are not parallel, the distance between sign faces at their widest point shall not exceed 35 feet. The separation of sign faces at their closest point shall not exceed six feet. In no event shall the angle between sign faces exceed 37 degrees.

**G. Projection.** Off-site signs shall not project beyond the building line.

**H. Covering.** The backs of off-site signs exposed to public view shall be covered with a finished surface or material and shall be properly maintained.

**I. Other Requirements.**

1. A maximum of two poles shall be permitted for any off-site sign. The maximum cross-sectional dimension of a pole shall not exceed ten percent of the overall height of the sign.
2. Off-site sign supports shall be structurally independent of a building.

3. Sign support structures must be located directly under the sign face as viewed from the front of the sign. The maximum horizontal distance between the center of the sign support structure and the sign face shall not exceed ten feet.

#### **SEC. 14.4.18. AWNING SIGNS.**

No awning sign shall be placed on any portion of an awning except the valance. The sign area is limited to a maximum of 12 inches in height on the portion of the valance that is parallel to the building face, and only when the awning complies with all applicable provisions of Section 3202 California Building Code and Section 91.3202.3.1 of this Code. Awning signs are not permitted on awnings with a valance above a height of 14 feet as measured from the nearest sidewalk or edge of roadway grade to the top of the valance.

#### **SEC. 14.4.19. DIGITAL DISPLAYS.**

A. Digital displays with changing messages shall observe a minimum duration of 8 seconds for each message. The message must remain static between transitions.

B. Digital displays with changing messages shall utilize either an instant transition between messages, or a fading transition with a transition time between messages of not less than 1 second and not more than 2 seconds. At no time shall a digital display go blank during a transition.

C. The maximum brightness of any digital display shall not exceed 600 candelas per square meter during the nighttime and 3,500 candelas per square meter during the daytime. Digital displays shall transition smoothly at a consistent rate from the permitted daytime brightness to the permitted nighttime brightness levels, beginning at 45 minutes prior to sunset and concluding 45 minutes after sunset. Measurements shall be provided by the owner of the sign and submitted to the Department of Building and Safety when requested by that Department.

#### **SEC. 14.4.20. VINTAGE ART MURALS.**

This section is reserved for future regulations on vintage art murals.

#### **SEC. 14.4.21. SIGNS IN A AND R ZONES.**

##### **A. General Provisions.**

1. No freestanding sign shall exceed a height of six feet.

2. No sign which is attached to a building shall project above the lowest portion of any roof, eave or ridge of the building.

3. A sign may be single-faced or double-faced and may be located in any required front yard, side yard, rear yard, passageway or other required open space.

**B. Temporary Signs.** Temporary signs shall be allowed in the A1, A2, RA, RE, RS, R1, RU, RZ, RW1, R2, RD, RMP, RW2, R3, R4 or R5 zones, subject to the following regulations:

1. The sign area of all temporary signs on a lot shall be less than 20 square feet for all the sign faces.

2. Temporary signs shall comply with the time limit specified in Section 14.4.15 of this article, except that temporary signs related to the occasional sale of used and hand made goods cannot be erected more than two days prior to the sale and shall be removed by sunset of the day of the sale.

**C. Permanent Signs.** Permanent signs shall be allowed in the zones and subject to the provisions listed below:

1. **A1 and A2 Zones.** Any number of awning signs or wall signs and one pole sign or monument sign shall be permitted on each lot. No individual awning sign or wall sign shall exceed 20 square feet in area. No individual pole sign or monument sign shall exceed nine square feet in area. The sign area of all permanent signs on a lot in the A1 or A2 zones shall not exceed 30 square feet in area for all the sign faces.

2. **RA, RE, RS, R1, RU, RZ, RW1, R2 and RW2 Zones.** One wall sign not to exceed two square feet in area shall be allowed on each lot.

3. **RD Zones.** Any number of awning signs or wall signs and one pole sign or monument sign shall be permitted on each lot. No individual awning sign or wall sign shall exceed 15 square feet in area. No individual pole sign or monument sign shall exceed nine square feet in area. The sign area of all permanent signs on a lot in the RD zones shall not exceed 20 square feet in area for all the sign faces.

4. **R3, R4, and R5 Zones.** Any number of awning signs or wall signs and one pole sign or monument sign shall be permitted on each lot. No individual awning sign or wall sign shall exceed 20 square feet in area. No individual pole sign or monument sign shall exceed nine square feet in area. The sign area of all permanent signs on a lot in the R3, R4, or R5 zones shall not exceed 30 square feet in area for all the sign faces.

5. **RMP Zone.** Any number of awning signs or wall signs shall be permitted on each lot. No individual awning sign or wall sign shall exceed 10

square feet in area. The sign area of all permanent signs on a lot in the RMP zone shall not exceed 15 square feet in area for all the sign faces.

#### **SEC. 14.4.22. SIGN ADJUSTMENTS.**

**A. Authority.** The Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to grant an adjustment of the provisions of this article pertaining to height, location, sign area of an individual sign, shape, projection, and clearance of signs; time limit of temporary signs; and sign type on commercial corners and mini-shopping centers. Any request for an adjustment pertaining to height or sign area of an individual sign is limited to an increase of 20 percent beyond what is otherwise permitted by this Code.

**B. Procedures.** No Sign Adjustment may be granted unless the Zoning Administrator makes all of the findings specified in this section. In making determinations on applications for a Sign Adjustment, no consideration shall be given to the content or message of the sign. The procedures for considering applications for a Sign Adjustment shall be the same as the procedures for Adjustments set forth in Section 12.28 of this Code, except that the findings for approval shall be as follows:

1. that site characteristics or existing improvements make strict adherence to the sign regulations impractical or infeasible; and
2. that the requested signage shall be compatible with the surrounding environment. Compatibility shall be determined by the relationships of the elements of form, proportion, scale, color, materials, surface treatment, overall sign size and the size and style of lettering. The surrounding environment shall be comprised of other nearby signs, other elements of street and site furniture, and adjacent properties.

**C. Plan Approvals.** The procedures for considering an application for a plan approval for a Sign Adjustment shall be the same as the procedures for variances set forth in Section 12.27 U of this Code, except that the findings for approval shall be the findings set forth under subsection B of this Section.

#### **SEC. 14.4.23. SIGN VARIANCES.**

**A. Authority.** The Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to grant a variance in the provisions of this article pertaining to height, location, sign area of an individual sign, location of combined sign area, shape, projection, clearance, time limit of temporary signs, sign type, and number of signs. No Sign Variance shall approve any sign prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of this Code.

**B. Procedures.** No Sign Variance may be granted unless the Zoning Administrator makes all of the findings specified in this section. In making determinations on applications for a Sign Variance, no consideration shall be given to the content or message of the sign. The procedures for considering applications for a Sign Variance

shall be the same as the procedures for Variances set forth in Section 12.27 of this Code, except that the findings for approval shall be as follows:

1. that the strict application of the sign regulations would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purposes and intent of the sign regulations;
2. that there are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity; and
3. that the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of the special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied to the property in question.
4. That the requested signage shall be compatible with the surrounding environment. Compatibility shall be determined by the relationships of the elements of form, proportion, scale, color, materials, surface treatment, overall sign size and the size and style of lettering. The surrounding environment shall be comprised of other nearby signs, other elements of street and site furniture, and adjacent properties.

**C. Plan Approvals.** The procedures for considering an application for a plan approval for a Sign Variance shall be the same as the procedures for variances set forth in Section 12.27 U of this Code, except that the findings for approval shall be the findings set forth under Subsection B of this Section.

#### **SEC. 14.4.24. COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PROGRAMS.**

**A. Purpose.** A comprehensive sign program is intended to integrate the design of signs with the design of a development project's buildings and structures, in order to create a unified design or architectural theme. A further purpose of a comprehensive sign program is to define common sign regulations for multi-tenant development projects and to meet the special sign requirements of uses with a need for flexible and innovative sign regulations, including museums and other cultural institutions, universities and college campuses, automotive dealerships, and stadiums and other sporting facilities. A comprehensive sign program is intended to create clear and attractive signs while complementing and protecting the character of surrounding areas by limiting visual clutter through appropriate regulation of the number, type, location, height, illumination, and orientation to and distance from the nearest street of the signs that the comprehensive sign program allows.

**B. Eligibility.**

1. An application for a comprehensive sign program may only be submitted for existing or proposed development projects on development sites that meet either of the following size criteria:

a. A minimum of three acres of non-residential development or at least 50,000 square feet of non-residential floor area if the site is located in an area designated on an adopted community plan as "Regional Center" or "Regional Commercial" or is located in the "Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Area," as defined in Section 12.03 of this Code.

b. A minimum of five acres of non-residential development or at least 100,000 square feet of non-residential floor area if the site is located in any other area.

2. A comprehensive sign program cannot be requested for property within an established Sign District or within the area of any Specific Plan or Overlay that contains special signage regulations.

**C. Sign Regulations.** A comprehensive sign program may include provisions that vary from Sections 14.4.6, 14.4.7, 14.4.8, 14.4.9 (except 14.4.9 C3 and C4), 14.4.10, 14.4.11, 14.4.12, 14.4.13, 14.4.14, 14.4.15, 14.4.16; 14.4.18; 14.4.19; 14.4.20; and 14.4.21 of this Article; except any provisions limiting combined sign area; and including provisions governing the location of combined sign area. A comprehensive sign program may only authorize sign types defined in this article. The number, type, location, height, illumination, and orientation to and distance from the nearest street of all proposed permanent and temporary signs must be identified in the approved comprehensive sign program. In addition, the approved comprehensive sign program must identify the number of days each temporary sign will remain in one location.

**D. Prohibited Signs.** A comprehensive sign program may not include any signs prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of this Code, except that off-site signs may be allowed, so long as they are consistent with the purpose of this section and are not visible from any public right of way or adjacent property.

**E. Procedures.** The initial decision-maker for a comprehensive sign program shall be the City Planning Commission and the appellate body shall be the City Council.

1. **Application.** An application for a comprehensive sign program shall be filed at a public office of the Department of City Planning, on a form provided by the Department, and accompanied by applicable fees. The application must identify, through a visual representation in color, the number, type, location, height, illumination, and orientation to and distance from the nearest street of all proposed permanent and temporary signs. In addition, the application must identify the number of days each temporary sign will remain in one location and how and to what extent all proposed signs vary from the provisions of this article. The application must also demonstrate, through architectural elevation drawings

or other visual representation, that any requested off-site signs will not be visible from any public right-of-way or adjacent property.

2. **Public Hearing and Notice.** The City Planning Commission shall set the matter for a public hearing, following the procedures for providing notice of the time, place and purpose of the hearing as set forth in Section 12.24 D of this Code.

3. **Initial Decision by the City Planning Commission.** The City Planning Commission's initial decision shall be supported by written findings of fact based upon written or oral statements and documents presented to the Commission, which may include photographs, maps, and plans, together with the result of staff investigations. Upon making a determination pursuant to an application for a comprehensive sign program, the City Planning Commission shall transmit a copy of the written findings and decision to the applicant, the Department of Building and Safety, owners of all properties within 100 feet of the boundary of the subject property, owners of all properties abutting, across the street or alley from, or having a common corner with the subject property, and to all persons who have filed written requests for this notice with the Department of City Planning, and the applicable Certified Neighborhood Council. The City Planning Commission shall also place a copy of the findings and decision in the file.

4. **Content or Message.** The City Planning Commission's review of an initial comprehensive sign program, or an amendment to an approved comprehensive sign program, shall not consider the content or message of the proposed signs.

5. **Off-Site Signs.** A maximum of 10% of the signs permitted through a Comprehensive Sign Program shall be off-site signs.

6. **Findings.** The City Planning Commission, or the City Council on appeal, shall make all of the below findings in order to approve an application for a comprehensive sign program. For the purposes of these findings, "compatibility" shall be determined by the relationships of the elements of form, proportion, scale, color, materials, surface treatment, overall sign size and the size and style of lettering; and the "surrounding environment" shall be comprised of other nearby signs, other elements of street and site furniture, and adjacent properties.

a. The proposed signs are compatible with each other and with the overall design or architectural theme of the project;

b. The proposed signs are compatible with the buildings and structures on the development site and with the surrounding environment;

c. Any proposed signs within 500 feet of a residentially zoned lot are compatible with residential uses; and

d. No proposed off-site sign will be visible from any public right-of-way or adjacent property.

**7. Filing of an Appeal.** Any person aggrieved by an initial decision of the City Planning Commission concerning a comprehensive sign program, may appeal the decision to the City Council by filing an appeal with the Department of City Planning within 15 days of the date of mailing of the City Planning Commission's decision. The appeal shall be filed at a public office of the Department of City Planning, on a form provided by the Department, and shall set forth specifically the points at issue, the reasons for the appeal, and the basis upon which the appellant claims there was an error or abuse of discretion by the City Planning Commission. The City Council shall not consider any appeal not filed within the 15-day period. The filing of an appeal stays proceedings in the matter until the City Council has made a decision. Once an appeal is filed, the City Planning Commission shall transmit the appeal and the file to the City Council. At any time prior to the action of the City Council on the appeal, the City Planning Commission shall submit any supplementary pertinent information it deems necessary or as the City Council may request.

**8. Appellate Decision - Public Hearing and Notice.** Before acting on the appeal, the City Council shall set the matter for hearing. The Department shall give notice by mail of the time, place and purpose of the hearing to the appellant, to the applicant, to the owner or owners of the property involved, to the City Planning Commission, and to any interested party who has requested in writing to be so notified. The notice shall be mailed at least 24 days prior to the hearing.

**9. Time for Appellate Decision.** The City Council shall make its decision within 75 days after the expiration of the appeal period. The 75 day time limit to act on an appeal may be extended by mutual written consent of the applicant and the City Council. If the City Council fails to act within this time limit, the action of the City Planning Commission shall be final.

**10. Appellate Decision.** The City Council may reverse or modify the ruling or decision appealed from only upon making written findings setting forth specifically the manner in which the action of the City Planning Commission was in error or constituted an abuse of discretion. The City Council's decision shall be based solely on the record and evidence and testimony introduced at the hearing. Upon making a decision, a copy of the findings and decision shall forthwith be placed on file in the Department of City Planning, and copies of the decision shall be sent to the applicant, the appellant, the Department of Building and Safety, and the Director of Planning.

**11. Compliance with an Approved Comprehensive Sign Program.**

(a) **Sign permit.** The Department of Building and Safety shall not issue a sign permit for a sign on any development site subject to a



comprehensive sign program unless it complies with the applicable comprehensive sign program, as determined by the Director of Planning.

**12. Plan Approvals.** The procedures for considering an application for a plan approval for a comprehensive sign program shall be the same as the procedures set forth in Section 12.24 M of this Code, except that the findings for approval shall be the findings set forth under Paragraph 5 of this Subsection.

#### **SEC. 14.4.25. CONTINUATION OF NONCONFORMING SIGNS.**

Any existing sign that lawfully existed at the time the regulations with which it does not conform became effective may be continued, repaired and rehabilitated, including changes or replacement of copy and necessary structural, electrical and mechanical alterations to be conducted as set forth in Section 91.6216 of this Code. If the sign or sign support structure is a qualified historical structure then the applicant may utilize the California Historical Building Code if desired, in which case the California Historical Building Code shall govern and not Division 62 of this Code. The replacement of nonconforming signs is allowed as permitted by Section 16.03 or Section 12.23 A 4 of this chapter, or when the work is required in order to comply with an order issued by the Department of Building and Safety to repair or remedy an unsafe or substandard condition.

#### **SEC. 14.4.26. VIOLATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL PENALTIES.**

This section governs violations of the sign regulations set forth in this article and violations of any other sign regulations established by ordinance. It also governs the assessment of administrative civil penalties.

**A. Purpose.** The City Council finds there is a need for alternative methods of enforcing all provisions of this Code pertaining to signage. The City Council further finds that the assessment of civil penalties for violations of the sign regulations is a necessary alternative method for gaining compliance with the sign regulations. The assessment of civil penalties established in this article is in addition to any other administrative or judicial remedies established by law which may be pursued to address violations of the sign regulations.

#### **B. Authority and General Provisions.**

1. The Department of Building and Safety shall have the authority to issue orders to comply and assess penalties against any and all responsible parties for violations of any provisions of this Code pertaining to signage.

2. The owner of the property on which a sign is located and the owner of the sign and sign support structure are both responsible parties for complying with all provisions of this Code pertaining to signage. In addition, both responsible parties are individually liable to pay the civil penalties assessed pursuant to this section.

3. Violations of the sign regulations are deemed continuing violations and each day that a violation continues is deemed to be a new and separate offense.

4. Whenever the Department of Building and Safety determines that a violation of the sign regulations has occurred or continues to exist, the Department of Building and Safety may issue a written order to comply to each of the responsible parties.

5. The order to comply shall be posted in a conspicuous location on the premises where the violation has occurred and mailed via U.S. first class mail to each responsible party.

6. Penalties are due and payable within 15 days of the date postmarked on the order to comply, unless the violation is corrected.

7. The amount of penalties shall follow the chart in Subsection C below. These penalty amounts shall be in addition to any other fees required by Chapter IX of this Code.

8. After correcting the violation, the responsible party must contact the representative of the Department of Building and Safety who issued the order to comply, to request a re-inspection. Any penalties assessed will cease to accrue starting on the day that the Department of Building and Safety determines through its re-inspection that the violation has been corrected.

9. All other matters pertaining to the issuance of orders to comply and assessment of penalties for sign code violations, to include the processing of appeals, shall be as regulated by Chapter IX of this Code.

**D. Amount of Penalties.**

1. The amount of administrative civil penalties for off-site signs are as set forth in the following table:

SIGN AREA OF OFF-SITE SIGN IN VIOLATION	CIVIL PENALTIES PER DAY OF VIOLATION		
	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation and All Subsequent Violations
Less than 150 square feet	\$2,500	\$4,000	\$8,000
150 to less than 300 square feet	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$16,000
300 to less than 450 square feet	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$24,000
450 to less than 600 square feet	\$8,000	\$16,000	\$32,000
600 to less than 750 square feet	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$40,000

750 or more square feet	\$12,000	\$24,000	\$48,000
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2. The amount of administrative civil penalties for on-site or noncommercial signs of any size shall be the same as the general civil penalty defined in Section 11.00 L of this Code, for the first and all subsequent violations.

3. Civil penalties per day of a violation of Section 14.4.21 of this article for signs of less than 20 square feet in sign area shall be \$500 per day of violation for the first and all subsequent violations.

**D. Collection.**

1. If the civil penalties are not paid in a timely manner, the City Council may order that the civil penalties be specially assessed against the real property on which the sign found in violation is located. If the City Council orders that the civil penalties be specially assessed against the real property on which the sign found in violation is located, it shall confirm the assessment, and the assessment may be collected at the same time and in the same manner as ordinary real property taxes are collected. The assessment shall be subject to the same penalties and the same procedure and sale in case of delinquency as provided for ordinary real property taxes. All laws applicable to the levy, collection, and enforcement of real property taxes are applicable to the special assessment.

2. The City Council may also cause a notice of lien to be recorded. The notice shall, at a minimum, identify the record owner or possessor of the real property, set forth the last known address of the record owner or possessor, the date on which the civil penalties were imposed, a description of the real property subject to the lien, and the amount of the penalty.

3. Any unpaid civil penalties may also be collected in accordance with the procedures set forth in Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 5.181 *et seq.*

**E. General Fund.** Civil penalties collected pursuant to this section shall be credited to the general fund.

**SEC. 14.4.27. RECOVERY OF COSTS.**

Pursuant to the procedures and authority found in Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 7.35.3, any City department shall be entitled to recover any fee, charge or cost incurring in enforcing the sign regulations that is collectible under Government Code Section 54988. Collectible fees, charges or costs shall include permit fees, fines, late charges, interest and costs incurred in performing inspections and otherwise enforcing the sign regulations.

**Sec. 13. APPLICATION OF REGULATIONS TO EXISTING PROJECTS AND INITIATED OR APPLIED FOR SIGN DISTRICTS AND SPECIFIC PLANS.**

This ordinance amends Article 4.4 and related provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code to enact new requirements and provisions regulating signs. This ordinance also amends Section 13.11 of the Code to enact new findings and other criteria for the establishment of "SN" Sign Districts. This Section sets forth the rules for application of this ordinance to discretionary land use approvals and initiated or applied for Sign Districts and specific plans.

**Discretionary Land Use Approvals.** This ordinance shall not apply to any discretionary land use approval set forth in Section 16.05 B 2 or Section 11.5.7 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code granted prior to the effective date of this ordinance, provided the approval is still valid and specifically allowed signs or otherwise granted relief from the sign regulations. In particular, this ordinance shall not supersede any of the provisions set forth in the approval related to signs, nor shall it supersede any of the procedures set forth in Chapter I of the Los Angeles Municipal Code that authorize a decision-maker to modify the provisions set forth in the approval related to signs.

**Initiated or Applied for Sign Districts.**

Any initiated or applied for Sign District shall be subject to the Sign District regulations in this Code as of August 9, 2011, rather than to the subsequently updated regulations.

An "initiated or applied for Sign District" is one which was not approved before August 9, 2011 but was initiated or applied for before this date, pursuant to Section 12.32 of this Code; or any Sign District for which precise boundaries were identified in a notice of preparation for a environmental impact report posted by the Department of City Planning before August 9, 2011.

After an initiated or applied for Sign District is adopted, any proposed amendments that would allow signs prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of this Code shall be subject to the Sign District provisions in this Code at the time such regulations are proposed.

**Initiated or Applied for Specific Plans.**

Within any initiated or applied for specific plan, any regulations that permit signs prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of this Code shall be removed from the specific plan and established within a proposed Sign District. The proposed Sign District shall be reviewed concurrently with the specific plan, shall not require an application fee, and shall be subject to the Sign District regulations in this Code as of August 9, 2011, rather than to the subsequently updated regulations.

An "initiated or applied for specific plan" is one which was not approved before August 9, 2011 but was initiated or applied for before this date, pursuant to Section 12.32 of this Code; or any specific plan for which precise boundaries were identified in a notice of preparation for a environmental impact report posted by the Department of City Planning before August 9, 2011.

After an initiated or applied for specific plan is adopted, any proposed regulations that would allow signs prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of this Code shall also be established within a Sign District, subject to the Sign District provisions in this Code at the time such regulations are proposed.

Sec. 14. Subsection G of Section 19.01 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

**G. Sign Applications.**

**[FILING FEE]**

<b>Type of Application</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Comprehensive Sign Program (Section 14.4.24)	\$11,738
Amendment of Comprehensive Sign Program (Section 14.4.24)	\$5,748
Sign Variance (Section 14.4.23)	\$6,448
Sign Adjustment (Section 14.4.22)	\$5,370
Plan Approval – Sign Variance (Section 14.4.23 C)	\$5,754
Plan Approval – Sign Adjustment (Section 14.4.22 C)	\$5,754

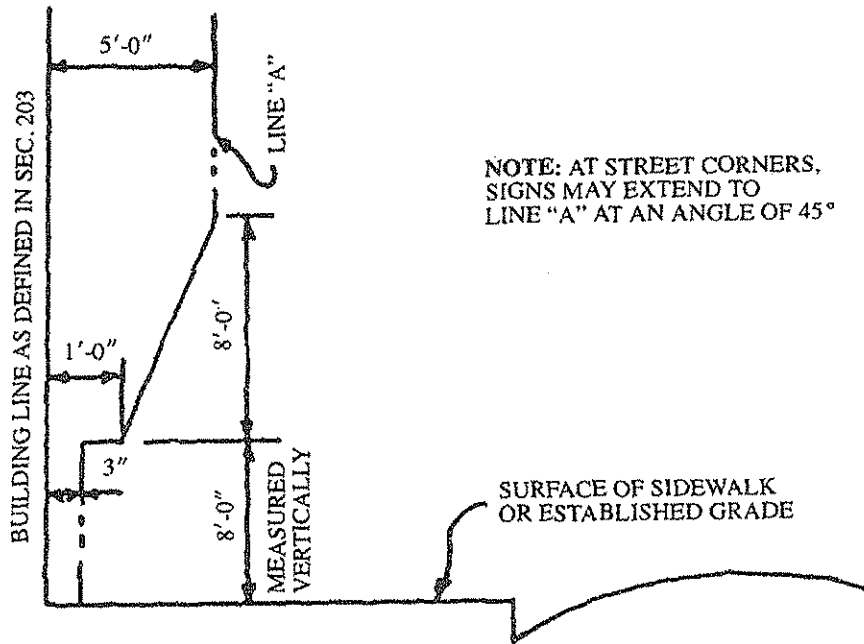
**Sec. 44 15. STATEMENT OF INTENT.**

This ordinance amends Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code to clarify that the sign regulations are permissive. This ordinance affirms the Council's intent that a use or structure is only allowed if the codes and ordinances of the City of Los Angeles expressly allow it. Any use or structure that is not regulated by these codes and ordinances is prohibited. This amendment clarifies the Council's long-standing interpretation and does not change existing law.

In addition, when supergraphic signs, extremely large wall signs, first appeared they were regulated as either wall signs or temporary signs. In 2002, the Council added a definition to the Code for supergraphic signs and enacted a ban. This ordinance deletes the definition of supergraphic signs. It is the intent of Council in enacting this ordinance's new provisions to again require that supergraphic signs comply with the provisions of wall signs or temporary signs.

In addition to the above, Council's enactment of this ordinance is an exercise of the City's police powers and, therefore, its provisions shall apply to all signs citywide regardless of any provisions to the contrary set forth in a settlement agreement entered into prior to the effective date of this ordinance.

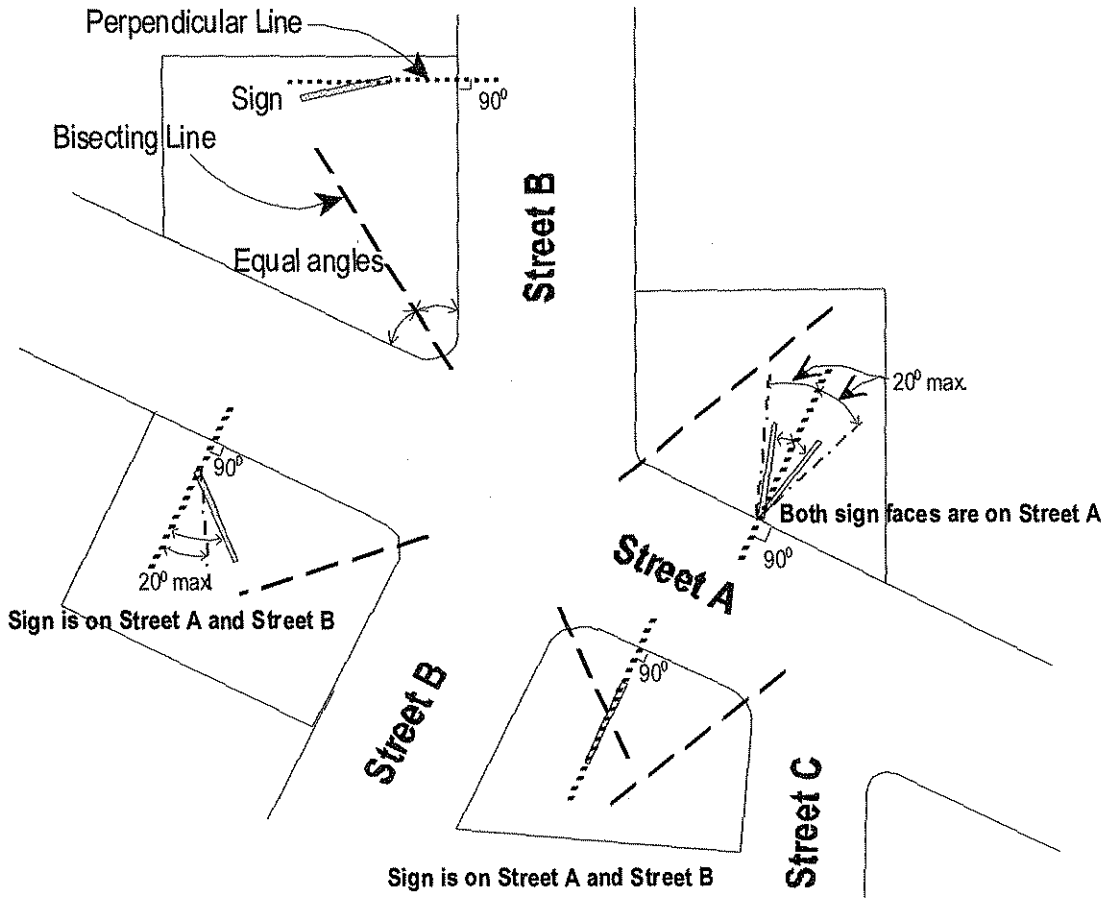
**DIAGRAM A**



**TABLE NO. B  
SPACING REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN OFF-SITE SIGNS**

	Sign Area	PROPOSED SIGN		
		Less than 80 sq. ft.	80 sq. ft. to 300 sq. ft.	Greater than 300 sq. ft.
<b>Existing or Permitted Sign</b>	Less than 80 sq. ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	200 ft.
	80 sq. ft. to 300 sq. ft.	100 ft.	300 ft.	300 ft.
	Greater than 300 sq. ft.	200 ft.	300 ft.	600 ft.

**DIAGRAM C**



**Attachment 1**  
**Summary of Key Features of the Proposed Sign Ordinance**

The following summary tables highlight the key features of the proposed sign ordinance. Where further discussion of the proposed changes is needed, it is provided below the summary table.

**1. Sign Districts**

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Current Code</b>	<b>Proposed Change from Current Code</b>	<b>Summary of Reason for Change</b>
Zones & land use designations eligible to apply for a Sign District	All C and M zones; R5 zones in regional centers/regional commercial/high intensity commercial and redevelopment areas	Limit to regional centers/regional commercial and greater downtown area	Off-site signage can help create a vibrant sense of place when focused in true districts that are the city's principal commercial centers.
Size of proposed Sign District	At least 1 block or 3 acres	At least 5,000 feet of street frontage or 15 acres	See above; a single large project in L.A. can easily cover 1 block; true districts are larger. Also, project-specific exceptions to the city's off-site sign ban may be legally problematic.
Review processes to allow off-site signage	Specific Plans and Sign Districts can allow off-site signs	Only Sign Districts can allow off-site signs (unless signs are not visible from a public right of way or adjacent properties; see Comprehensive Sign Programs under item 2 below)	The Sign District mechanism increases consistency of review and standards for all areas of the city with large-scale, special signage. It also provides a reasonable limit to location of Sign Districts, instead of allowing off-site signs anywhere in the city as a Specific Plan could do.

**Size and location of Sign Districts**

Currently, Sign Districts can be established over areas as small as one block, and can include any commercially or industrially zoned properties. Because of these loose criteria, the establishment of Sign Districts has been wide open to the discretion of those reviewing them. In litigation, court opinions have pointed out this subjective type of review allows decision-makers to approve Sign Districts in a "willy-nilly" fashion anywhere in the city they choose, on properties so small that they could involve a single property owner. From a land use perspective, such a significant granting of rights for such a small parcel of land can be likened to "spot-zoning". The courts have further pointed out that relying solely on the discretion of decision-makers without clear parameters or limits can too easily set the stage for consideration of the content of a sign's message or the identity of its speaker (owner/advertiser) – potential violations of the speaker's First Amendment rights. The findings required to approve Sign Districts have similarly been criticized for being too subjective and vague.

Regulations that are found to be unconstitutional are in danger of being invalidated and removed from the Zoning Code, leaving that aspect of the City's built environment unregulated. The proposed sign ordinance is designed to prevent such an outcome. It establishes clear and



objective standards for where Sign Districts may be located and what size they can be, and also clarifies the required findings.

In addition to the legal considerations, there are significant planning, policy and land use issues related to the location and size of Sign Districts. Sign Districts generally establish a more visually intense pattern of signage than the neighborhoods that surround them, and this visual intensity can have both positive and negative impacts. Vibrant commercial signage can help stimulate commerce and economic development, and can help create a sense of place within a bustling commercial center. At the same time, when intense signage is allowed in too many locations or in locations that are not centers of commerce, culture, entertainment or international transport, the effect can be visually jarring or incongruous, and a sense of place may be replaced by a sense of disorientation.

Sign Districts should be exceptional areas that stand out as regional destinations, and they should be large enough to actually be Districts, rather than just a few buildings that do not add up to a regional destination with a unique quality, theme or character. To meet this objective, the proposed ordinance establishes a minimum size standard of 5,000 linear feet of street frontage or 15 acres for Sign District applications. These size thresholds represent a minimum size for a true District, and would be easily met by such recent examples as the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District Specific Plan area (over 25 acres and 8,000 feet of frontage), the Los Angeles Convention Center and Arena Sign Ordinance area (over 64 acres and 11,000 feet of frontage), and the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District area (much larger, acreage not available at time of publication of this report; over 5 miles of frontage).

Further, it provides that Sign Districts may only be located in specified zones within areas planned for Regional Center or Regional Commercial land uses; or in the area of the LAX Specific Plan or the Port of Los Angeles Plan, if the plan authorizes off-site signage through a Sign District; or in specified zones within the Greater Downtown area. The Regional Center, Regional Commercial and Downtown Center land use designations are the most commercially intense land uses within our General Plan Framework. These are areas that serve as regional destinations and within which the exceptional visual intensity of a Sign District may be appropriate.

### **Sign Reduction**

The proposed sign ordinance includes a provision for Sign Districts that would require the reduction of more than one square foot of existing off-site signage in order to install one square foot of new off-site signage. This requirement is intended to support the City's off-site sign ban by not adding any additional off-site sign area to the City, but controlling and optimizing its placement.

During the ordinance development process, it was proposed that there could be alternate methods by which the right to install new off-site signage could be earned, such as through the provision of community benefits. These benefits could include streetscape improvements, pedestrian amenities, graffiti removal, and other measures that could help mitigate any adverse visual impacts of new off-site signage. While this proposal is compelling in concept, further study revealed that it can be quite difficult to accomplish in practice. The extent of community benefits are difficult to quantify; for example, it would be very difficult to determine how many and what kind of street trees it would take to counter-balance the visual impact of 1,000 square feet of off-site signage. Such determinations would have to be very subjective, which is dangerous territory when it comes to the allowance of exceptions to the off-site sign ban.

Perhaps most importantly, the sign reduction provisions in Sign Districts would be the City's only method available for the reduction of off-site sign clutter. Streetscape improvements and other community benefits can be gained through Development Agreements and entitlement conditions of approval, which often coexist with Sign Districts. The "greater than one for one" sign reduction requirement is a powerful tool to reduce sign clutter while enabling the installation of more modern and appropriately located off-site signs.

**Review processes to allow off-site signage**

Under the current code, exceptions to the city's off-site sign ban can be established not only through a Sign District, but also through a Specific Plan. This has raised legal concerns because, as described in the paragraphs above, the process by which off-site signs are allowed needs to be very standardized and objective, rather than loose and open to broad discretion. Because each Specific Plan is unique, and there are no set standards for how signs can be regulated within a Specific Plan, this particular review process is too open-ended to apply to the unique legal landscape of sign review. In addition, because a Specific Plan can be established anywhere in the City, any off-site signage allowed by that Specific Plan could potentially be located anywhere in the City – a "willy-nilly" approach that has made the City's sign ordinance vulnerable to invalidation in the recent past.

Instead, when a Specific Plan is being developed over an area for which off-site signage will be proposed, those sign regulations can be separated out into a Sign District, which can be reviewed concurrently with the Specific Plan. In this way, the integrity of the overall review process is maintained, while the sign component is organized into a standardized form. In addition to being more legally defensible, this standardized form will also be easily accessible for stakeholders and City staff who want to quickly understand what the sign regulations are for this Specific Plan area, rather than sifting through the various chapters of a Specific Plan. It will also facilitate consistency among all the City's Sign Districts, to ensure that we are reviewing all such signage requests according to an even standard. Finally, this approach will ensure that off-site signs are allowed only in appropriate locations that are eligible for a Sign District, rather than anywhere throughout the city.

**2. Requests for Deviation from the Sign Code**

Provision	Current Code/Policy	Proposed Change from Current Code	Summary of Reason for Change
Overall system of relief mechanisms	A zone variance is required for all deviations from the sign regulations (except requests for off-site signs)	A three-tiered system of sign-specific tools to review different types of requests	"One size fits all" approach creates unnecessary work in some cases, leaves out important considerations in others
Sign Adjustment	N/A (new provision)	Requests of up to 20% beyond allowed individual sign area and height; all requests for location, shape, projection, clearance, time limit of temporary signs, or sign type for commercial corners/mini shopping centers	Basic level of review for relatively minor requests; same procedures as a Zoning Administrator Adjustment, with sign-specific findings

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Current Code/Policy</b>	<b>Proposed Change from Current Code</b>	<b>Summary of Reason for Change</b>
Sign Variance	N/A (new provision)	All other signage requests for permitted sign types	More stringent review for more major requests; same procedures as a Zone Variance, with sign-specific hardship findings
Comprehensive Sign Program	N/A (new provision)	Review of larger projects with multiple signage requests and/or off-site signs that function as interior signs because they are not visible from any public right-of-way or adjacent property.	Comprehensive review of all signage is appropriate for larger projects. Special internal signage may be appropriate for sites such as campuses and large shopping centers.

Currently, requests to deviate from the citywide sign regulations are processed through a Zone Variance. This is because of court rulings that point out that the City's other review mechanisms require findings that are too vague and subjective to be applied to the protected speech of signs. Of all of our currently required findings for various processes, only the first three of the five Zone Variance findings are clear and objective enough to be applied to signs. Because the Zone Variance findings require evidence of a real hardship on the part of the applicant, they are quite difficult to make, and cannot be applied to relatively minor requests.

To correct this deficiency, the proposed ordinance creates a three-tiered system of relief mechanisms to fit varying degrees of requested deviation from the code. The first is the Sign Adjustment, which is modeled closely after the existing Zoning Administrator Adjustment process but has findings tailored to the unique considerations of signage. This process can be used for relatively minor requests for up to 20% deviation from individual sign area and height, the two most potentially impactful standards; as well as requests for deviation from location, shape, projection, and clearance standards, and time limits of temporary signs. This process also applies to requests for deviation from the sign type limitations for commercial corners and mini shopping centers, which had previously been covered by a Conditional Use Permit process, before the court rulings mentioned above.

The second tier of relief from the code is offered through a Sign Variance, which is analogous to the existing Zone Variance process, but contains findings that are specific to signs. This process can be used for other requests beyond 20% deviation from individual sign area and height limitations.

Finally, the Comprehensive Sign Program is a tool for the review of requests for larger projects and properties that have unique or multiple signage needs and considerations that would be awkwardly addressed by separate applications of a Sign Adjustment or Sign Variance to individual signs. For these properties, a comprehensive review of all signage on the property and a packaging of all signage requests into one process would save the City time and result in a more unified assembly of signage for the property. Intended for large and unique properties such as shopping centers, museums and cultural institutions, stadiums and sports facilities, and college campuses, the Comprehensive Sign Program can also be used in some cases to allow off-site signage that is used in a way that is strictly internal to the property and cannot be seen from surrounding public streets or neighboring properties.

### 3. Enforcement Procedures and Penalties

Provision	Current Code	Proposed Change from Current Code	Summary of Reason for Change
Amount of penalties	Noncompliance fee \$550 + inspection fee \$336 = one-time fee of \$886	Sliding scale for off-site signs based on size and number of violations: \$2,500 to \$48,000 per day. On-site and noncommercial signs subject to a flat penalty of \$2,500.	Sign code violations are prevalent and it's difficult to achieve compliance with fees/penalties that don't compare to the profitability of signs.
Time to correct ("cure period")	30 days + 15 day appeal period (error or abuse appeals have no time limit)	15 days including appeal period (error or abuse appeals have no time limit)	Dept of Building & Safety recommends that 15 days is sufficient to correct most sign code violations; exceptions for extenuating circumstances can be worked out with the Inspector.
Process for appeals of violations/penalties	Appeals processed by Dept of Building & Safety	No change.	N/A

Currently, the fees that the Department of Building and Safety can charge for violations of the sign regulations are so small that they do not serve as a deterrent for violations, and are ineffective in gaining compliance with the code. In particular, some very large signs can generate revenue that dwarfs the existing noncompliance fee and inspection fee, which together amount to a one-time fee of \$886. The Department of Building and Safety has advised that sign code violations are the most difficult type of code violation to handle because of the small fees relative to the considerable profitability of large signs.

To address this problem, the proposed ordinance provides for a penalty structure based on sign size, with penalties structured in a three-tiered system based on number of violations, and ranging from \$2,500 up to \$48,000 per day. For the most part, the procedure by which these penalties are assessed and appealed would follow the current Building and Safety code enforcement system and regulations. The Department of City Planning gave serious consideration to an innovative suggestion from outdoor advertising industry representatives to institute a system of Administrative Law Judges to review sign appeals. However, the time and resources required to set up such a system seemed to outweigh the potential benefits of fast appeal processing times and standardized review of appeals, as these considerations do not currently seem to be a problem within the Department of Building and Safety's system of appeal review. Within this system, appeals through the initial level of review and, if necessary, through the Board of Building and Safety Commissioners are generally handled expeditiously in a matter of weeks.

The ordinance also reduces the amount of time to correct a sign deficiency from 30 days to 15 days, based on recommendations from the Department of Building and Safety. This "time to correct" can be adjusted by the representative of the Department of Building and Safety that issues the order to comply, based on extenuating circumstances and communication from the responsible party being cited.

#### 4. Signs in Partially Enclosed Spaces

Provision	Current Code	Proposed Change from Current Code	Summary of Reason for Change
Interior signs	N/A	Sign regulations do not apply to interior signs, which are surrounded by buildings or walls such that the signs are not visible from surrounding properties	Signs in enclosed spaces, such as outdoor shopping centers or college campuses, need not conform to the same standards as signs visible to the general public.

#### 5. Digital Display Regulations

Provision	Current Code	Proposed Change from Current Code	Summary of Reason for Change
Brightness	3 foot-candles	3500 candelas per square meter daytime; 600 at night	These standards, developed for the Wilshire Grand project, resulted from careful study of acceptable brightness levels of digital signs.
Message duration	N/A	8 seconds minimum	This standard is widely accepted by cities and the outdoor advertising industry
Message transition	N/A	Instant transition or 1-2 seconds if a "fading" transition	1-2 seconds is a widely accepted standard; instant transition was standard used for Wilshire Grand

While the regulation of digital displays is a complex matter, these three standards are intended as a step in the right direction pending further development of detailed regulations for digital displays. While a variety of potential brightness standards were discussed in the development of the proposed ordinance, the candela standard is one that was developed through the review of the Wilshire Grand project, and draws upon extensive discussions with leaders in the emerging LED lighting field. The proposed message duration and transition standards also draw upon industry standards as well as knowledge gained from the review of the Wilshire Grand project.

#### 6. Other Code Changes Directed by PLUM

The following additional code changes were included in keeping with the direction received from PLUM in November 2010.

**Signs in Residential and Agricultural Zones.** The proposed ordinance updates the sign regulations pertaining to residentially and agriculturally zoned property, because many of the existing regulations had related to the content of signs and were thus potentially unconstitutional.

**Historic Signs.** The proposed ordinance better enables the repair, rehabilitation and replacement of historic signs.

**Marquee Signs.** The proposed ordinance limits the attachment of additional signs on marquee signs.

**Signs in the Public Right of Way.** The proposed ordinance carries over a statement from the Building Code that previously applied to the sign regulations when they were contained in that code. This statement is that the sign regulations do not apply to properties located in a public right-of-way.

**Murals.** The proposed ordinance does not attempt to solve the complex issues surrounding the regulation of murals, but rather separates these issues into a separate ordinance that is currently under development by the Department of City Planning.

### 7. Additional “Clean Up” Items

During the ordinance vetting process conducted with stakeholders and City departments over the past several months, these items emerged as being in need of changes.

Provision	Current Code	Proposed Change from Current Code	Summary of Reason for Change
Hazard to Traffic	DBS refers signs within 500 feet of a freeway to DOT for hazard review.	Remove the current “hazard to traffic” provisions.	Hazard due to driver distraction is prohibitively difficult to determine. Driver distraction risks have been mitigated by the proposed new standards for digital displays.
Freeway Exposure	No signs within 2000 feet of a freeway unless DBS determines they’re not viewed primarily from the freeway. Exceptions for some smaller signs.	Retain the current provisions, which have recently been upheld in litigation. Future studies may consider changing these standards, which are difficult to enforce.	N/A
Right of Private Action	Not part of the current code, but previous proposal would have allowed private citizens the right to take legal action against sign code violators.	Remove these provisions.	These provisions could be open for abuse and could cost the City considerable time and resources in litigation.

### 8. Technical Changes proposed by Department of Building and Safety

The proposed ordinance contains a number of minor tweaks recommended by the Department of Building and Safety to help increase clarity and enforceability of the sign regulations.

## **9. On-Site Sign Regulations**

At the direction of PLUM, the proposed ordinance does not include the significant limitations on on-site signs that were originally proposed in 2009. These provisions were very controversial and the concerns surrounding them could not be resolved.

## **10. "Grandfathering"**

The proposed ordinance also includes a section that defines the rules for how and whether the proposed new regulations will apply to proposed Sign Districts and Specific Plans that are currently in the review process. These provisions are intended to provide a reasonable level of predictability and protection for the investment of time and resources into major projects that are expected to provide a benefit to the City.

**Attachment 2**  
**Prior Motions Directed by PLUM for Inclusion**  
**in the Citywide Sign Ordinance**

The below chart summarizes previous City Council motions on the sign ordinance which are recommended for inclusion in revisions to the sign code at this time. The motions themselves are attached, with page numbers as noted below.

<b>Page</b>	<b>Council District (Mover)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Council File #</b>	<b>Topic of Motion</b>	<b>Direction</b>
1	14	05/26/09	08-2020 (13C)	Marquee signs – limit attached signs	Include as a consensus item
2	14	05/26/09	08-2020 (13D)	Historic signs – repair & rehabilitation	Include as a consensus item
3	5	05/26/09	08-2020 (13J)	Interior signs – not subject to sign ordinance	Include as an issue that is legally necessary to resolve
4	4	05/26/09	08-2020 (9E)	Digital sign standards	Include the “8 second rule” as a consensus item
5	14	06/23/09	09-1533	Historic signs – replacement	Include as a consensus item



## Prior Motions Not Directed for Inclusion in the Citywide Sign Ordinance

The below chart summarizes previous City Council motions on the sign ordinance which are not recommended for inclusion in revisions to the sign code at this time. The motions themselves are attached, with page numbers as noted below.

Page	Council District (Mover)	Date	Council File #	Topic of Motion	Direction
6	9	05/26/09	08-2020 (13A)	Initiate & grandfather a proposed Sign District for Grand Avenue	Do not include; future Sign Districts should be requested after sign code revisions are complete
7	9	05/26/09	08-2020 (13B)	Widen eligibility for Comprehensive Sign Programs in greater downtown area	Do not include; revisions will not include Comprehensive Sign Programs as previously proposed
8	4	05/26/09	08-2020 (13G)	Sign Districts – greater downtown area only	Do not include per se; geographic restrictions on Sign District eligibility should be considered as part of the revisions
9	4	05/26/09	08-2020 (13H)	Grandfather 2 pending Sign Districts only	Do not include per se; grandfathering of pending Sign Districts should be considered as part of the revisions
10	6	05/26/09	08-2020 (13K)	Limit wall sign area to 300 sq ft per wall	Do not include; revisions will not include on-site sign restrictions
11	2	05/26/09	08-2020-S1	On-site sign inspection / fee program	Do not include; this is a complex program that should be developed by the Department of Building & Safety
12	6	07/08/09	08-2020-S3	Arts fee / arts messages	Do not include; not a consensus item and not legally necessary
13	7	07/15/09	Verbal and 08-2020-S4	Citywide billboard trade program	Do not include per se; billboard reduction should be considered as part of revisions to Sign District regulations
14	9	10/23/09	08-2020-S5	Exception from ban – substantial work	Do not include; already included in Ordinance #180841
15	13	11/03/09	09-2717	Re-permitting and modernization	Do not include; this is a complex issue that is neither a consensus item nor legally necessary

Page	Council District (Mover)	Date	Council File #	Topic of Motion	Direction
16	5	11/24/09	09-2855	On-site digital signs ICO for CD 5	Do not include; "short list" of revisions should be limited to those that have a citywide scope
17	1	12/9/09	08-2020-S6	Billboard reduction/relocation and revenue generation	Do not include per se; billboard reduction/relocation should be considered as part of revisions to Sign District regulations

130

MOTION

Marquee signs are most frequently seen on entertainment establishments such as theatres and are typically installed above an establishment's main entrance, where they are often utilized to display information about current and upcoming shows. Marquee signs tend to be rather large and visually distinctive, and in many cases help to define the character of the areas where they are located.

As currently written, the citywide sign ordinance allows additional signs to be affixed to the periphery of marquee signs. This language, which is a carry-over from the existing sign ordinance that was written in 1986, specifically allows cloth or banner signs or drop-roll curtains to be suspended below the exterior periphery, and extend down to within seven feet above grade.

Marquee signs, due to their large and distinctive characteristics, are an inappropriate location for additional signage. This outdated provision of the sign ordinance will only serve to invite more sign clutter into our City's visual environment.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council amend the sign ordinance approved by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, as follows:

Amend LAMC Section 14.4.14 B, concerning marquee signs, to read as follows: "B. Location. Signs shall not be attached to any portion of the marquee except on the periphery. Wall signs on the periphery of a marquee shall not extend above or below the periphery of the marquee. Signs shall not be extended above nor suspended below the exterior periphery of a marquee sign."

PRESENTED BY:   
JOSE HUIZAR  
Councilmember, 14<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY: 

MAY 26 2009

MAY 26 2009 REFERRED TO — PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

ORIGINAL

MOTION

130

There are many types of historically existing, non-conforming signs in our City's historic districts, especially in Downtown L.A. The ability to continue, repair and rehabilitate these signs which are an important part of our history is of utmost importance and enhances the historic character of the areas in which they exist.

As currently written, Section 14.4.22 of the citywide sign ordinance allows for the continuation of nonconforming signs, and refers to Section 91.6216 of the code for further specification on requirements pertaining to structural, electrical and mechanical upgrades. Further clarification should be made to clearly indicate the allowable continuation, repair and rehabilitation of these signs, and specifically direct references within the code to the appropriate sections, and outline options available within the California Historical Building Code for the continued use, repair and rehabilitation of existing non-conforming signs.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council amend the sign ordinance approved by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, as follows:

Amend the first sentence of Section 14.4.22 of Article 4.4 of Section 10 of the citywide sign ordinance, pertaining to the continuation of existing signs, to read as follows: "Any existing sign that lawfully existed at the time the regulations with which it does not conform became effective may be continued, repaired and rehabilitated, including necessary structural, electrical and mechanical alterations to be conducted as set forth in Section 91.6216 of this Code. If the sign or sign support structure is a qualified historical structure then the applicant may utilize the California Historical Building Code if desired, in which case the California Historical Building Code shall govern and not Division 62 of this code."

I FURTHER MOVE that City Council initiate an amendment to LAMC Section 91.6216 of Chapter IX of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, pertaining to existing signs, to read substantially as follows:

91.6216.4.3. "The alteration, repair or rehabilitation of any existing sign or sign support structure that exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of both the sign and sign support structure must comply with all the requirements of Division 62 of this code. If the sign or sign support structure is a qualified historical structure then the applicant may utilize the California Historical Building Code if desired, in which case the California Historical Building Code shall govern and not Division 62 of this code."

MAY 26 2009

PRESENTED BY:

Jose Huizar  
JOSE HUIZAR  
Councilmember, 14<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:

[Signature]

MAY 26 2009 REFERRED TO PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

EG

ORIGINAL

MOTION

130

Pursuant to Section 14.4.3.A, the Sign Ordinance only applies to exterior signs and sign support structures except for signs or sign support structures that face an interior court bounded on all sides by one or more buildings and no sign is higher than the surrounding building walls. However, further clarification is necessary to ensure that the Sign Ordinance also will continue not to apply to signs located on the interior of larger, campus-like properties, including such destinations as entertainment, sports, cultural, and academic facilities, which do not affect the visible attributes of the public realm, but because of an open air design are not bounded on all sides by one or more buildings. To provide a clear rule, the exterior sign provisions should not apply to signs located on development sites over 40 acres, with controlled vehicular access, where such campuses have interior roadways, private streets, alleys, or walkways, and the signs are located 25 or more feet from a public right-of-way. To assist the Department of Planning and Department of Building and Safety in implementing and enforcing Section 14.4.3.A as to signs that are located on the interior of larger, campus-like properties, a process such as a Zoning Administrator Interpretation with strict criteria should be established to clarify whether a property qualifies as a campus.

I THEREFORE MOVE that Sign Ordinance Section 10, Article 4.4 of Chapter I of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, Section 14.4.3.A should be amended as follows:

A. Scope. All exterior signs and sign support structures shall conform to the requirements of this article and all other applicable provisions of this Code.

**EXCEPTION:** Signs or sign support structures shall not be considered exterior if they face an interior court bounded on all sides by one or more buildings and no sign is higher than the surrounding building walls. In addition, signs or sign support structures shall not be considered exterior if they are located on the interior of a Campus such as portions of properties that constitute development sites over 40 acres, with controlled vehicular access, with interior roadways, private streets, alleys, or walkways, and where such signs are located 25 or more feet from a public right of way. The Zoning Administrator shall be authorized to issue a Zoning Administrator Interpretation as to whether a property qualifies as a Campus.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of Planning, in consultation with the Department of Building and Safety and the City Attorney, establish a process such as a Zoning Administrator Interpretation with strict criteria to clarify whether a property is within the scope of the Sign Ordinance as set forth in Section 14.4.3.A and to ensure that that the Sign Ordinance does not unnecessarily restrict signs located on the interior of a campus such as portions of properties that constitute development sites over 40 acres, with controlled vehicular access, and with interior roadways, private streets, alleys, or walkways, where such signs are located 25 or more feet from a public right-of-way.

Presented by [Signature]  
Jack Weiss, Councilmember, 5th District

Seconded by [Signature]

MAY 26 2009

MAY 26 2009 — REFERRED TO — PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

ORIGINAL

EG

MOTION

On March 26, 2009, the City Planning Commission recommended revisions to the citywide sign ordinance. One of the Planning Commission's recommendations was to prohibit digital signs, both on-site and off-site, except in sign districts. Currently, the Zoning Code allows on-site digital signs by-right, and the current interim control ordinance prohibiting off-site digital signs is set to expire in a matter of weeks.


On May 12, 2009, the Planning and Land Use Management directed the Planning Department and the Department of Building and Safety to create standards for digital signs to reduce their brightness and illumination, control the amount of flashing, and limit their hours of operation to mitigate impacts on adjacent communities and promote traffic safety.

Close to 100 legally approved, digital billboards currently exist in Los Angeles, many in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. While digital billboards are the most intrusive sign types, some types of on-site digital signs, such as "electronic message boards", may be useful. These types of digital signs can communicate to the public such information as the time of day, the temperature, and special events.

In light of the above, it is important to update the City's sign ordinance to reflect recent changes in digital technology and create appropriate citywide standards for digital signs.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct the Department of City Planning, with the assistance of the Department of Transportation, the Department of Building and Safety, and the City Attorney, to recommend revisions within 120 days to the citywide sign ordinance concerning digital billboards and digital on-site signs. Specifically, the recommended revisions should include appropriate land use measures that regulate the brightness and illumination; hours of operation, and number of messages allowed every minute on digital signs. The recommended revisions should also include appropriate traffic safety measures and appropriate land use measures to mitigate the impact of digital signs on residential and mixed-use neighborhoods. The recommended revisions must also include provisions for "electronic message boards."

PRESENTED BY:

  
TOM LABONGE  
Councilman, 4<sup>th</sup> District

MAY 26 2009

SECONDED BY:

  
BILL ROSENDAHL  
Councilman, 11<sup>th</sup> District

ORIGINAL

MAY 26 2009 REFERRED TO

PLANNING & LAND  
USE MANAGEMENT

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09-1533

JUN 23 2009

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

MOTION

Historic signs are an essential part of our City's cultural heritage. Historic signage such as rooftop signs, blade signs, and painted signs contribute greatly to the identity and vitality of the City's historic districts and monument buildings. Over time, some historic signs have been removed from their historic locations for various reasons, such as damage, material degradation, vandalism, or the preference and trends of previous decades which may not have properly recognized the historic value of such signs. In many instances, only historic photographs or surviving structural elements provide evidence that a sign ever existed on a historic building.

The proposed citywide sign ordinance currently pending review before the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee (Council File: 08-2020) does not currently allow for the reconstruction, replacement, or re-creation of removed historic signs. The proposed ordinance should be amended to delineate a process by which historic signs which can be proven to have previously existed on historic monument buildings or on buildings within official historic districts may be restored, replaced or reconstructed to enhance the historic nature of a building and provide historical context for the benefit of our City's current and future residents.

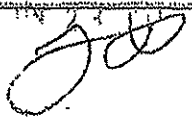
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of City Planning, in conjunction with the City Attorney and the Department of Building and Safety, develop a discretionary review process by which the reconstruction, replacement, or re-creation of historic signs may be permitted on historic buildings that are City designated Historic-Cultural Monuments or buildings listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources. This discretionary process should involve review by the Department of City Planning Office of Historic Resources, and should apply to the reconstruction, replacement, or re-creation of historic signs for on-site purposes only when sufficient documentary proof is submitted that a historic sign once existed at that location and that the reconstructed, replaced, or re-created sign will enhance the historic nature of the building and / or historic district.

PRESENTED BY:

  
JOSE HUIZAR  
Councilmember, 14<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:





ORIGINAL

MOTION

90  
13A

The Grand Avenue Project is key to the continued revitalization of downtown and will transform the civic and cultural districts of downtown Los Angeles into a new regional center with entertainment venues, restaurants, retail, a hotel and up to 2,660 units of mixed-income housing. On February 13, 2007 the Los Angeles City Council unanimously approved a project Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) and Final Environmental Impact Report for the Grand Avenue Project. Additionally, on September 19, 2007, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously approved project entitlements including a zone change, tentative tract maps and a Development Agreement for the Grand Avenue Project. As referenced in both the project DDA and in the conditions for approval the zone change, a Supplemental Use District for signage has long been a part of the development strategy for The Grand Avenue Project.

In recognition that certain redevelopment projects have spent considerable time and effort prior to the Interim Control Ordinance for off-site signage and prior to the proposed revisions to the Citywide Sign Ordinance, the proposed ordinance makes consideration for ten areas that have previously been initiated for SUD by Council motion or by application from property owners. The "grandfathering" of those areas from the requirements of the new ordinance is appropriate as the projects proposed have relied on the old ordinance while making significant investment on project plans. As the Grand Avenue Project has similarly relied on the previous ordinance, it too should be included as one of the areas to be grandfathered.

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the Planning Department be directed to initiate proceedings and prepare the necessary maps and reports to establish a SUD for signage that includes the parcels delineated in the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Plan as Parcels Q, L, M, W-1 and W-2, and which are recognized in various City approved agreements as the Development Parcels for the Grand Avenue Project.

**I FURTHER MOVE** that the City Council amend the sign ordinance approved by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee by including the aforementioned SUD for signage for the Grand Avenue Project as one of the "grandfathered" areas outlined in Section 12 of the proposed ordinance.

PRESENTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Signature]*  
JAN PERRY  
Councilmember, District Nine

SECONDED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Signature]*

ORIGINAL

MAY 26 2009

MAY 26 2009 - REFERRED TO - PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

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MOTION

13 B

The City's General Plan recognizes downtown Los Angeles as the primary economic, governmental and social focal point of the region, with an enhanced residential community. It is the largest government center in the region and the location for major cultural and entertainment facilities, hotels, high-rise residential towers, regional transportation facilities and the Convention Center.

In recognition of its singular and unique status, the City's zoning code includes many special zoning tools applicable only to downtown and nowhere else. Often, these zoning tools apply to a "greater downtown" area, which includes immediately adjacent properties that functionally relate to the primary central city and therefore require consistent and integrated land use planning.

The downtown-specific zoning tools include a parking exception area for the central city, which relaxes parking requirements for commercial and industrial properties, and the downtown adaptive reuse ordinance, which provides incentives to convert underutilized nonresidential buildings into housing in the greater downtown Los Angeles area. The most recent downtown-specific zoning tool provides incentives to construct new, built-from-the-ground-up housing in a defined "greater downtown housing incentive area."

As the above zoning tools illustrate, the planning and development challenges facing the greater downtown area are unique, generating a need for regulations different from the rest of the City. This same principle applies to signage. Sign regulations that can be customized and tailored to meet downtown's special circumstances are necessary, in order to further the City's continuing goal of revitalizing and enhancing its central core.

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the City Council amend the sign ordinance approved by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, as follows:

- (1) amend LAMC Section 14.4.21 B2, concerning the application requirements for comprehensive sign programs, as follows: "2. May only be submitted for existing or proposed development projects on development sites that have a minimum of five acres and at least 100,000 square feet of non-residential floor area, except that in the Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Area a development site need only have either a minimum of five acres or at least 100,000 square feet of floor area."
- (2) amend LAMC Section 13.11 B1, concerning the establishment of sign districts, as follows: "1. The procedures set forth in Section 12.32 S of this Code shall be followed; however, each 'SN' Sign District shall only include properties in the C, M, PF or R5 Zones and are located: (a) in the Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Area; or (b) in an area designated on an adopted community plan as 'Regional Center' or 'Regional Commercial.'"

PRESENTED BY:

Council Member Jan Perry  
9<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:

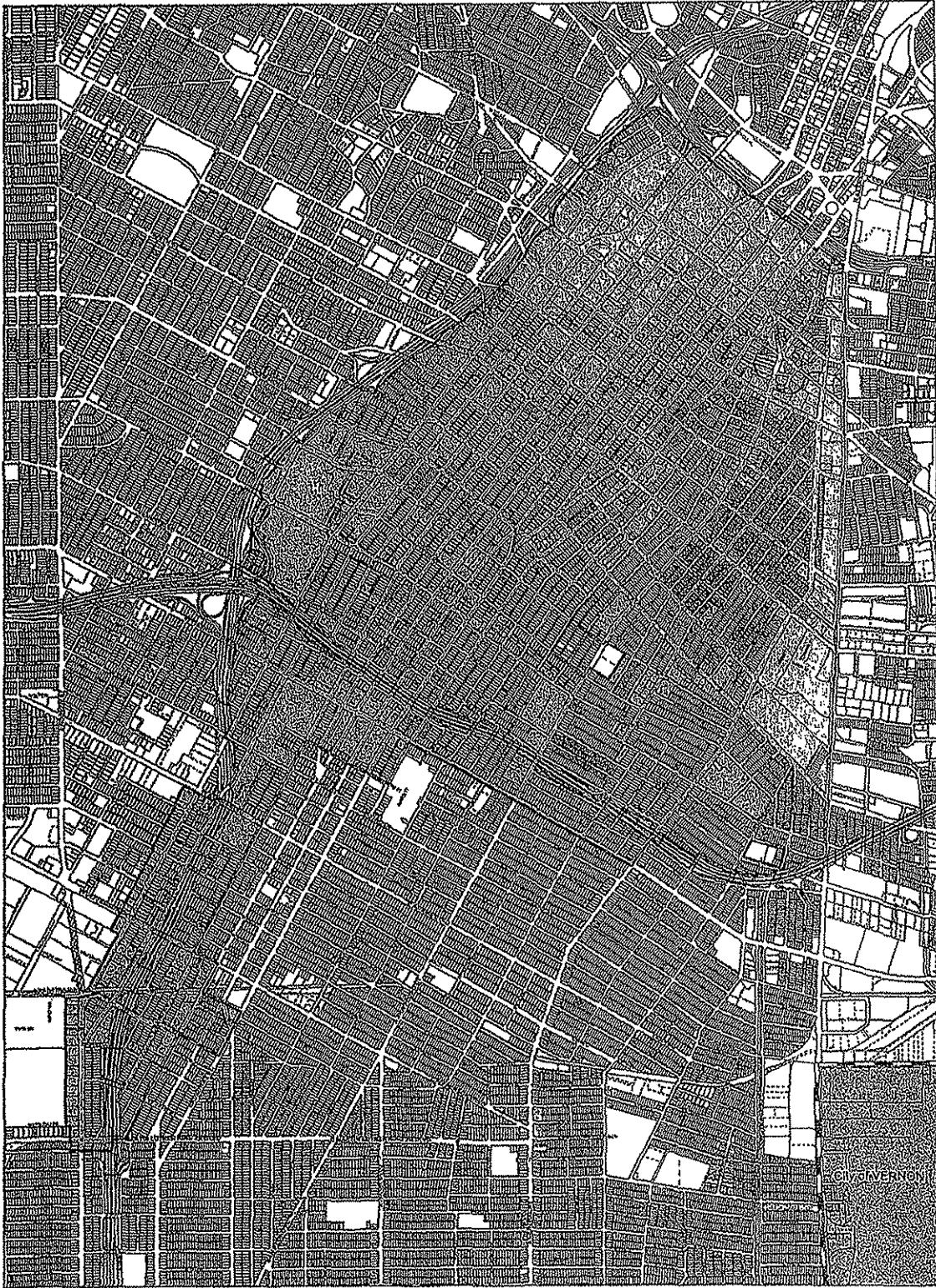
*[Signature]*

MAY 26 2009

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MAY 26 2009 REFERRED TO — PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

EG



**Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Area**

CPC-2005-1122, CPC-2005-1124, CPC-2005-0361

Data Source: Department of City Planning, Bureau of Engineering, Community Stakeholders Agency, LLC  
The map is for informational purposes only. © 2005 Thomas H. Lawrence & Co., LLC



NOT TO SCALE

Prepared by the Department of City Planning  
Systems & GIS Division, January 2007



Map Document: 041...\_MAP\_C0505112210205112410361\_011907.mxd 1/25/2007

7-A

MOTION


The revised, comprehensive sign ordinance approved by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee on May 12, 2009 contains many good features that control unwanted signage and prevent visual clutter. But the proposed new ordinance also allows sign districts in regional centers and regional commercial areas, as well as downtown. Sign districts can allow digital signs and billboards, the most visually intrusive of sign types.


Many regional centers and regional commercial areas are in close proximity to residential neighborhoods and are therefore inappropriate for new billboards and digital signs.

The only new location where these types of signs may be appropriate is downtown. Suitable locations already exist downtown for the placement of new off-site signs and digital signs. Limiting new sign districts to downtown would curb visual clutter in other areas of the City. Amending the sign ordinance to only allow new sign districts downtown would not affect any existing, established sign districts, or any areas governed by other adopted ordinances that allow new billboards or digital signs.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council amend the sign ordinance approved by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, as follows:

Amend LAMC Section 13.11 B 1, concerning the establishment of sign districts, to read: "1. The procedures set forth in Section 12.32 S of this Code shall be followed; however, each 'SN' Sign District shall only include properties in the C, PF, or R5 Zones, in the Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Area."

PRESENTED BY:   
TOM LABONGE  
Councilman, 4<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:   
BILL ROSENDAHL  
Councilman, 11<sup>th</sup> District

MAY 26 2009

ORIGINAL

MAY 26 2009 - REFERRED TO - PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

EG

13H

MOTION

13H

The proposed citywide sign ordinance sets forth significant improvements in the standards of eligibility and review for Sign Districts. Under the proposed standards, Sign Districts would be limited to only those areas planned for the most intense commercial development – regional centers, regional commercial areas, and the downtown center. Mandatory sign reduction has also been added, as well as more specific findings. These new standards will provide better protection for neighborhoods, and make the sign ordinance more legally defensible.

However, the pipeline of pending Sign Districts and special signage areas approved for “grandfathering” by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee is a throwback to the old standards that have gotten the City into legal hot water and negatively impacted neighborhoods. Under this provision, the new Sign District rules would not apply to any of ten areas for which a Sign District or other special signage approval has already been requested. All of the new benefits of the proposed new Sign District regulations would skip over these areas, and the neighborhoods surrounding them.

The “grandfathering” standards originally approved by the City Planning Commission should be reinstated, to allow the grandfathering of only two requested Sign Districts.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council amend the sign ordinance approved by the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, as follows:

Amend the third paragraph of Section 12 of the sign ordinance to read as follows: “This ordinance shall also not apply to “SN” Sign Districts that have not been established, but that the City Planning Commission had approved on or before March 26, 2009, pursuant to Section 12.32 of the Code.”

PRESENTED BY:



TOM LABONGE  
Councilman, 4<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:



BILL ROSENDAHL  
Councilman, 11<sup>th</sup> District

ORIGINAL

MAY 26 2009

MAY 26 2009 - REFERRED TO - PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

# ITEM 13 K

## MOTION

I MOVE that the matter of the Negative Declaration, Communication from the City Attorney and Ordinance First Consideration relative to amending Sections 11.5.7, 12.05, 12.21, 12.22, 12.23, 13.11 and Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to establish total sign area limits for properties; establish area and height limits for individual signs; prohibit off-site signs, digital displays and roof signs; create new relief provisions for certain deviations from the sign regulations; establish administrative civil penalties for violations of the sign regulations; enact new criteria for the establishment of sign districts; and enact related technical corrections and other measures to reduce visual clutter and otherwise mitigate the potential impacts of signs on the visual environment, Item 13 on today's Council Agenda (CF 08-2020) BE AMENDED to adopt the following change:

K. Maximum Sign Area. The maximum sign area for on-site signs allowed on a street frontage shall be one square foot of sign area for every linear foot of street frontage and 1.5 square feet of sign area for every linear foot of building frontage. This sign area may be aggregated on one on-site sign or multiple on-site signs, provided that no wall shall have more than 300 square feet of signage and provided that each individual sign complies with all applicable provisions of this article.

PRESENTED BY:

*Tony Cardenas*  
TONY CARDENAS  
Councilman, 6<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:

*Richard Alarcon*

May 26, 2009

ak

ORIGINAL

MAY 26 2009 - REFERRED TO -

PLANNING & LAND  
USE MANAGEMENT

EG

08-2020-81

MAY 26 2009

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

MOTION

As we prepare to amend our Sign Ordinance within the City, it has become abundantly clear that a large part of the "sign blight" we face comes from illegal on-site signage, signage that given the appropriate amount of enforcement resources would not exist today in our visual environment.

As part of our overall focus to eliminate the visual clutter in our City, we need to not just rely on complaint-based enforcement of today's on-site signage. We need to follow the model that we established for our Off-Site Sign Inspection Program, dedicated inspectors whose only job is to do systematic code enforcement of on-site signage.

Given the current financial status of the City, allocating funds for dedicated on-site sign inspectors seems implausible.

THEREFORE I MOVE that the City Planning Department and Department of Building and Safety conduct a nexus study, to be reported back with the one-year review of the Sign Ordinance, to determine what the cost and possible fees would need to be to sustain a Citywide On-Site Inspection Program Team for the City of Los Angeles.

PRESENTED BY: Wendy Greuel  
WENDY GREUEL  
Councilmember, Second District

SECONDED BY: [Signature]

ORIGINAL

MAY 26 2009

ELG

08-2020-27

APR 08 2009

MOTION

I MOVE that the matter of a NEGATIVE DECLARATION, COMMUNICATION FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY and ORDINANCE FIRST CONSIDERATION relative to amending Sections 11.5.7, 12.05, 12.21, 12.22, 12.23, 13.11 and Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to establish total sign area limits for properties; establish area and height limits for individual signs; prohibit off-site signs, digital displays and roof signs; create new relief provisions for certain deviations from the sign regulations; establish administrative civil penalties for violations of the sign regulations; enact new criteria for the establishment of sign districts; and enact related technical corrections and other measures to reduce visual clutter and otherwise mitigate the potential impacts of signs on the visual environment (CF 08-2020), currently pending in the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, BE AMENDED to ADOPT the following ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Instruct the Planning Department, with the assistance of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Council District Six, and in consultation with the City Attorney, to prepare and present an Ordinance to require a 1% "Arts Fee" for all newly permitted billboards and supergraphics, based on the revenue generated by each individual billboard and supergraphic sign.
2. Instruct the Planning Department, with the assistance of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Council District Six, and in consultation with the City Attorney, to prepare and present an Ordinance to require that 6.25% of digital billboards' "air time" be allocated to art messages. The time during which the messages will be displayed, and the art message content is to be defined by the Department of Cultural Affairs.

PRESENTED BY Tony Cardenas  
TONY CARDENAS  
Councilmember, 6<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY [Signature]  
[Signature]  
[Signature]

ORIGINAL

RME

APR 08 2009

CA

**VERBAL MOTION**

I HEREBY MOVE that Council INSTRUCT the Planning Department to consider the feasibility of creating a new sign trade program.

PRESENTED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
RICHARD ALARCON  
Councilmember, 7<sup>th</sup> District

PRESENTED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
BILL ROSENDAHL  
Councilmember, 11<sup>th</sup> District

May 26, 2009

CF 08-2020a.mot

MAY 26 2009 — REFERRED TO —

PLANNING & LAND  
USE MANAGEMENT



MOTION

The current state of the City of Los Angeles with regards to outdoor advertising is one of clutter, visual nuisance, and the negative impacts associated with burdening the City's residents with visual distractions and safety hazards.

It is clear to both the City's community residents and advertising companies that something must be done to change the current status quo and improve the quality of life in the City of Los Angeles.

Unfortunately, the draft sign ordinance (CF 08-2020) being considered by the City of Los Angeles will only affect *new signage* and will not address the impact of existing signage that residents find a visual nuisance and overburden our streets, roads and communities with signage.

Therefore, any new sign ordinance adopted by the City of Los Angeles should be in conjunction with an ordinance to create a "Billboard Reduction Trade Program," covering the signs that are currently spread throughout the city, and providing opportunities to reduce billboard blight. This clarifies and sets guidelines to the amending motion (CF 08-2020a.mot) Councilmember Alarcón introduced on May 26, 2009 to create a new sign trade program. The "Billboard Reduction Trade Program" would be a voluntary program to allow outdoor advertising companies to develop a limited number of outdoor signs provided that they *permanently remove* a greater number of existing outdoor signs and reduce the overall square footage of outdoor signs.

The "Billboard Reduction Trade Program" ordinance shall be designed to reduce the total number of outdoor advertising signs, and it shall not protect illegal signs or profit companies that erected such signs illegally.

It is critical that the "Billboard Reduction Trade Program" include a measurable sign reduction strategy in square footage, a living-wage ordinance for labor standards, revenue generation mechanisms, public service benefits, proximity to sensitive land uses, such as single family homes, and require that safety provisions be set by the City of Los Angeles.

The "Billboard Reduction Trade Program" should have the effect of creating quality jobs, generate a significant revenue stream for the City of Los Angeles during a time of budget crisis, provide better information to residents during a time of emergency, protect single family neighborhoods from visual nuisances and bright lights, transform the current existing signs into ones that abide by safety regulations, and significantly reduce the total number of outdoor advertising signs within the City of Los Angeles.

Lamar Advertising Company, which, after purchasing Vista Media Group, became the largest owner of outdoor advertising signs in the City of Los Angeles, approached Council District 7 with a similar proposal which should be vetted and analyzed by City staff.

Under the Lamar proposal, the company proposes reducing its current 4,000 billboards to approximately 500, proposing to generate up to \$970,000 in one-time demolition permit fees, and suggests approximately \$2,000,000 in additional fees for the City for the 500 replacement signs. Additionally, Lamar suggests that it could contract with the City to relocate at least 100 of the new replacement signs on City property, generating \$6,000,000 in revenue per year. The proposal estimates employing at least 50 workers in living wage jobs and would generate new opportunities for job creation if other outdoor advertising companies participate in the program.

JUL 15 2009

In total, there are 8,000 signs in the City of Los Angeles. The Lamar proposal alone could yield a net reduction of 44% of all outdoor signs, and perhaps the largest visual blight removal process in the history of the City.

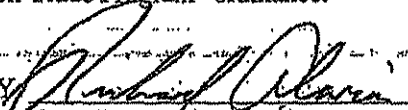
The relocated signs would also have to agree to evolving safety standards set by the City, and provide the City access to digital signs to quickly relay community bulletins and emergency information during disasters.

I THEREFORE MOVE, that the City Council instruct the City Attorney, with assistance from the Chief Legislative Analyst, the Planning Department, the Department of Building and Safety, the City Administrative Officer and other departments, as needed, to draft an ordinance to create a citywide "Billboard Reduction Trade Program" to be offered to all companies that conduct outdoor advertising in the City of Los Angeles with the intent of reducing the overall number of outdoor signage citywide. The "Billboard Reduction Trade Program" should include the following features:

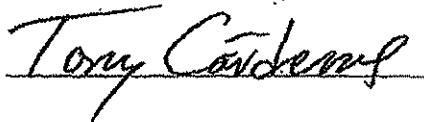
- 1) Measure the reduction of signage in a consistent and comparable manner that is based on square footage.
- 2) Include a labor provision that specifies a living wage requirement for the removal and installation of signage.
- 3) Address revenue provisions that require new permit fees, Building and Safety maintenance fees, and, in instances where the City of Los Angeles is the property owner of the billboard site, a contract to ensure collection of revenue.
- 4) Prohibit the advertising of alcohol, tobacco and other addictive substance on billboards located on City of Los Angeles property.
- 5) Define public service requirements that include allowing the City of Los Angeles and Emergency Management agencies to use digital signs to relay information.
- 6) Prohibit new signs from being built in proximity to sensitive land uses such as single family homes.
- 7) Prohibit signs that were not legally permitted from participating under the ordinance.
- 8) Require that companies who participate in the program acknowledge and agree to evolving safety standards set by the City of Los Angeles, upon proper notice.

I FURTHER MOVE, that the City Council instruct the City Attorney's office, with assistance from the Chief Legislative Analyst, the Planning Department, the Department of Building and Safety, the City Administrative Officer and other departments, as needed, to analyze the specifics of the proposal submitted by Lamar Advertising Company to Council District 7 in the development of a citywide "Billboard Reduction Trade Program" ordinance.

PRESENTED BY:

  
RICHARD ALARCÓN  
Councilmember, 7<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:



08-2020-55

OCT 23 2009

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT


### MOTION

I MOVE that the City Attorney be requested to prepare and present an ordinance to amend Ordinance No. 180841 relating to off-site signs, off-site digital displays and supergraphic signs (adopted August 7, 2009, CF 08-2020) to implement the following technical corrections in order to more accurately reflect the intent of the City Council with regard to this matter as well as to achieve conformity with State law:

Amend Ordinance Section 3 second paragraphs relative to both Section 9 and Section 11 (EXCEPTIONS) to read as follows:

“In addition, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 12.26 A 3 of this Code, this prohibition shall not apply to any building permit issued if the Department of Building and Safety determines that, prior to the effective date of this ordinance, both substantial liabilities have been incurred and substantial work has been performed on site, in accordance with the terms of that permit pursuant to Section 91.106.4.3.1 of this Code.”

PRESENTED BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JAN C. PERRY  
Councilwoman, 9<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

ORIGINAL

October 23, 2009  
ak

EG

09-2717

MOTION PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

In prior settlement agreements with various billboard companies- CBS Outdoor, Clear Channel, Regency, and Vista, the City allowed the re-permitting of existing signs as well as modernization (e.g. second faces or digitization) of signs through the assignment of "credits."

NOV 03 2009

Summit Media, also a billboard company, filed a lawsuit in 2006 arguing that the settlement agreements were illegal because it granted CBS Outdoor and Clear Channel rights to convert 840 of their billboards to a digital format, while at the same time disallowing other billboard companies to convert their billboards.

To establish an administrative and regulatory scheme that is both constitutional and consistent, the Council recommends the following policy directives relative to billboards, thereby ensuring that all applicants are treated alike.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council instruct the Department of Building and Safety as follows:

1. Immediately cease issuing permits for sign modernizations or for sign re-permitting.
2. Suspend any active sign permit applications for sign modernizations or for sign re-permitting.
3. Ensure compliance with the Summit Media decision by investigating already-issued permits for both sign modernization and sign re-permitting.
4. Immediately evaluate whether signs should be revoked or modified, or if orders to comply should be issued, so sign companies shall (a) remove and demolish signs, or (b) modify them to comply with grandfathered permits.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council instruct the Department of Building and Safety to prepare a report within 30 days as follows:

1. Incorporate the above instructions into the existing Off-Site Sign Periodic Inspection Program (OSSPIP).
2. Explain how OSSPIP will systematically review signs for compliance with the Summit Media decision.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council request the City Attorney to prepare and present an ordinance to amend Ordinance No. 180841 relating to off-site signs, off-site digital displays and supergraphic signs (adopted August 7, 2009, CF 08-2020) to reflect the intent of the Council as follows:

"New permits issued under the settlement agreements are not to be considered in determining whether a billboard is entitled to grandfathering under the new ordinance."

NOV - 3 2009

PRESENTED BY EG  
Eric Garcetti  
Councilmember, 13<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY J.P. Reyes  
ED P. Reyes  
Councilmember, 1<sup>st</sup> District

ORIGINAL

09-2855  
C05

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

MOTION

NOV 24 2009


The City of Los Angeles recently updated its regulation of off-site advertising and signs. Work continues on the proper regulation of on-site signage including digital and other non-traditional forms of signage. The volume, visibility and design of signage have a major impact upon communities, their design and their quality of life. Signage, whether for on or off-site advertising, can also have an impact on traffic safety and on environmental quality through illumination and spillover lighting.

Work remains ongoing on reforming citywide signage regulations for on-site signage. Additionally, the Department of City Planning is working on new Community Plans throughout the City that will provide community-specific regulations on many issues including signage. No two neighborhoods within the City of Los Angeles are identical and therefore a need exists for geographically specific planning and zoning restrictions.

Council District 5 is governed by a variety of Specific Plans, Design Overlays and Scenic Highway designations intended to preserve the visual quality of the district and its neighborhoods. These plans, restrictions and designations were adopted prior to the widespread adoption of digital signage and do not contain adequate provisions to protect neighborhoods from the negative impact of digital signage.

I THEREFORE MOVE that an Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) be initiated to prohibit new digital on-site signage and digital on-site advertising within Council District 5, until such time as permanent neighborhood-specific regulations are adopted.

PRESENTED BY



Paul Koretz  
Councilman, 5<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY



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08-2020-56

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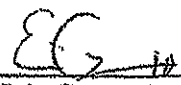
On August 7, 2009 the Council adopted Ordinance No. 180841 (CF 08-2020), which amended various sections of the Municipal Code prohibiting, Citywide, new supergraphic signs and new off-site signs, including off-site digital displays, and freeway visibility of signs.

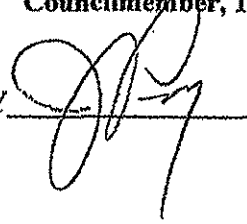
While Ordinance No. 180841 addresses *new* signage, existing signage is not regulated by the new provisions. Therefore, in the interest of land use policy, it would behoove the City to explore different policies to manage community concerns relative to assertions of clutter, visual nuisance, and negative land use impacts associated with existing off-site signs that are oftentimes the cause of visual distractions and traffic safety hazards.

While various policies have been suggested to address community concerns relative to the proliferation of existing signs, policy solutions have not been reached, and therefore, it makes sense for City staff to provide an economic revenue forecast and quantitative analysis of existing off-site signs, and thereby, provide community stakeholders and policy makers with policy alternatives to reduce billboard blight that is cost-effective.


**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the Council direct the Planning Department, in consultation with the Chief Legislative Analyst, to prepare a report that evaluates the feasibility of analyzing the benefits of implementing a billboard management program, and to conduct an off-site signs economic revenue analysis.

PRESENTED BY   
Ed P. Reyes  
Councilmember, 1<sup>st</sup> District

  
Eric Garcetti  
Councilmember, 13<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY 

December 9, 2009

rm 

DEC 9 2009

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