



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

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## Fwd: Billboard Mischief

1 message

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**Sharon Dickinson** <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>  
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Wed, Oct 7, 2015 at 7:19 AM

Etta,  
Please put on the 3 files listed below (11-1705, 08-2020 and 12-1611). Thanks.

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Sharon Dickinson  
Legislative Assistant  
Office of the City Clerk  
Council and Public Services  
Ph. (213) 978-1074  
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jack Humphreville** <JackH@targetmediapartners.com>  
Date: Tue, Oct 6, 2015 at 6:24 PM  
Subject: Billboard Mischief  
To: Sharon Dickinson <Sharon.Dickinson@lacity.org>

Sharon,

Sorry to bother you, but would it be possible to place this article in the following three Council Files.

And would it be possible for you to notify me when they are.

Thanks.

Jack Humphreville

11-1705

# Billboard Mischief

08 Oct 2015

Written by Jack Humphreville



LA WATCHDOG--We all know that you are in mortal danger when you place yourself between a member of the Los Angeles City Council and a campaign funding company or industry looking for special treatment, even if it is not in the best interest of the City or its residents.

This is certainly the case with the billboard companies who are looking for special treatment for the placement of their highly profitable digital billboards from the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee. Yet, despite widespread opposition to "billboard blight" by numerous Neighborhood Councils and other local organizations, **Jose Huizar** and **Mitch Englander**, two key members of this "juice" committee, have been unwilling to tell these very prosperous campaign funding enterprises "NO," contrary to their previous promises.

Of course, this was to be expected as these two ambitious politicians, along with fellow committee members, **Gil Cedillo**, **Felipe Fuentes**, and **Marqueece Harris-Dawson**, have received free billboard advertising and cash contributions from this multibillion dollar industry.

Underlying the two faced shenanigans of the City Council is the fact that digital billboards are extremely more valuable than "static" billboards because they generate considerably more revenues by broadcasting a new ad every eight seconds. For example, a single permitted digital billboard located in a high traffic location is worth way north of \$10 million.



As a result, billboard companies have sought to expand the geographic reach of digital billboards beyond the over 20 regional sign districts approved by the City Planning Commission in 2009, regardless of the environmental impact on residential neighborhoods or the community at large. These efforts were aided

by the City which even entered into a secret deal with several billboard companies. Fortunately, this deal was tossed out by the courts.

On October 22, the City Planning Commission will consider the existing sign ordinance and the many revisions proposed by the highly conflicted Planning and Land Use Committee that will weaken the sign ordinance and contribute to even more environmental blight.



But these billboard industry friendly revisions are not in the best interests of the City's residents and their communities.

The new sign ordinance should not grant amnesty to any the 937 billboards that lack permits or out of compliance with their permits.

Furthermore, any company that is not playing by the rules should not only be fined based on a multiple of the revenue implied by its rate card, it should also be placed in the penalty box and have its license to do business in the City suspended.

Any new digital billboards would require that at a minimum of 8 square feet of traditional billboards be removed for each square foot of digital billboards.

The new sign ordinance would not permit any new sign districts, including the 14 that have been added since 2009.

The new sign ordinance would not permit any digital billboards outside of the existing sign districts. This would include any digital billboards on City owned property outside a sign district as was suggested by Councilman **Paul Krekorian**, the revenue hungry Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee.

The new sign ordinance would also establish a Billboard Oversight Committee, funded by the billboard companies. It would report to the City Attorney and the City Administrative Officer. This committee would create an inventory of all existing billboards, including the ownership of individual billboards and the underlying land, and determine whether they are properly permitted and operating within the law. It would also review and authorize any new permits and be required to issue an annual report and meet with the public to discuss the state of the industry in our City.

Most importantly, the Billboard Oversight Committee would have the power to ensure the proper enforcement of the law.

The new sign ordinance would also require the billboard companies to report all political contributions, including ballot measures, whether in cash or in kind, for the last ten years.

Before considering a new sign ordinance, **Mayor Eric Garcetti** and the **Herb Wesson** led City Council need to conduct an extensive outreach program throughout the City. This will allow them to hear from

concerned citizens and not just the special interests that have the time and money to appear before the Council and its committees.

The Los Angeles Times' Editorial Board said that our City would be uglier if the City Planning Commission and the City Council eviscerated an "ordinance that would sharply curtail where new, bright, blinking digital billboards can be installed."

We agree. We need to eliminate billboard blight. And we cannot allow our ethically challenged City Council to be bought off the by the billboard industry.

*(Jack Humphreville writes LA Watchdog for CityWatch. He is the President of the DWP Advocacy Committee and a member of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council. Humphreville is the publisher of the Recycler Classifieds -- [www.recycler.com](http://www.recycler.com). He can be reached at: [lajack@gmail.com](mailto:lajack@gmail.com)) Top graphic courtesy [BanBillboardBlight.org](http://BanBillboardBlight.org). -cw*

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