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January 14, 2016

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Case No. CPC No. 2014-2711-CDO-SN-ZC
Council File No. 16-0020
Council District No. 14
Central City Community Plan

Honorable Members:

THE PROPOSED HISTORIC BROADWAY SIGN DISTRICT ON COMMERCIALY ZONED PARCELS ALONG SOUTH BROADWAY BETWEEN 1ST STREET AND 12TH STREET, MODIFICATION OF EXISTING [Q] CONDITIONS, AND CREATION OF THE BROADWAY STREETScape FUND

At its meeting held on January 12, 2016 the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee of the City Council recommended approval of the Historic Broadway Sign District. The proposal includes the establishment of a Sign Supplemental Use District, creation of the Broadway Streetscape Fund, and modification to existing zoning [Q] Qualifying Conditions related to signage. The PLUM Committee adopted modifications to the proposed Sign District ordinance which differ from those recommended for approval by the City Planning Commission in their action taken on August 13, 2015. The Director of Planning, therefore, is disapproving the modified Sign District ordinance on behalf of the City Planning Commission. The Director recommends that the City Council adopt the attached revised finding which reflect the modifications requested by the PLUM Committee.

MICHAL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning

Patricia A. Diefenderfer
Senior City Planner

HISTORIC BROADWAY SIGN DISTRICT - REVISED FINDINGS

1. General Plan/Charter Findings

In accordance with Los Angeles **City Charter Section 556**, the proposed Historic Broadway Signage Supplemental Use District Ordinance and accompanying zone changes are in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan. In addition, the proposed Sign District is consistent with and implements policies in the Central City Community Plan, a component of the Land Use Element of the General Plan.

General Plan Framework

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| Objective 3.11 | <i>Provide for the continuation and expansion of government, business, cultural entertainment, visitor-serving, housing, industries, transportation, supporting uses, and similar functions at a scale and intensity that distinguishes and uniquely identifies the Downtown Center.</i> |
| Objective 5.8.e | <i>Well-lit exteriors fronting on the sidewalk that provide safety and comfort commensurate with the intended nighttime use, when appropriate.</i> |
| Objective 5.8.4 | <i>Encourage that signage be designed to be integrated with the architectural character of the buildings and convey a visually attractive character.</i> |

The proposed Broadway Sign District is consistent with the policies of the General Plan Framework, which provides guidance on land use issues for the entire City. The proposed Sign District project is located within an area designated as "Downtown Center" on the General Plan Framework, which is defined as "the principal government and business center of the region, with a worldwide market." In order to meet a Downtown Center goal of being the primary economic, governmental, social and cultural focal point of the region, the Downtown Center development should reflect a high design standard. Permitting and regulating signage which contributes to the district's cultural significance will further the economic development goals of the General Plan Framework by allowing for greater marketing opportunities for potential tenants in the underutilized buildings along Broadway, and encouraging visitor-serving uses and tourism. The tailored regulations proposed in the Sign District will preserve and maintain the signage character and scale to ensure that it is compatible with the architectural context and that it conveys a visually attractive character.

Central City Community Plan

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| Objective 2-1 | <i>To improve Central City's competitiveness as a location for offices, business, retail, and industry. Increased flexibility for vibrant and contextual signage creates an opportunity to draw stable retail, restaurant, and entertainment tenants to locate on Broadway.</i> |
| Objective 2-2 | <i>To retain the existing retail base in Central City.</i> |
| Policy 2-2.2. | <i>Develop a plan and otherwise facilitate the development of nighttime entertainment uses, such as night clubs, bars, comedy clubs, dance clubs, restaurants and theaters in the vacant portions of the historic buildings on Broadway in the Broadway National Register Historic District which will rehabilitate the structures, revitalize the district and foster a 24-hour downtown.</i> |
| Objective 2-3 | <i>To promote land uses in Central City that will address the needs of all the visitors to Downtown for business, conventions, trade shows, and tourism.</i> |
| Objective 2-4 | <i>To encourage a mix of uses which create an active, 24-hour downtown environment for current residents and which would also foster increased tourism.</i> |
| Objective 10-2 | <i>To maintain and reuse one of the largest and most distinguished sets of underused historic buildings in the United States.</i> |

Encourage the transformation of Broadway Downtown to include the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for arts, cultural, entertainment, restaurant and retail uses as well as infrastructure improvements such as sidewalk rebuilding and streetscape and landscape improvements in conjunction with major public transit expenditures.

As noted above, the proposed Sign District implements many of the objectives and policies of the Central City Community Plan. The signs types and designs allowed in the proposed district will contribute to the unique character of Broadway which draws visitors into the project area. The introduction of the Broadway Off-Site Advertising Incentive Program creates new enticement for investment in Broadway's historic, but often under-utilized, stock of buildings. Broadway Incentive Signage will allow limited off-site signage in exchange for economic investment in the rehabilitation and reactivation of buildings. These foundational features of the proposed Sign District will foster the revitalization of vibrant day and night-time pedestrian uses along the Broadway corridor and throughout Downtown. Another provision of the Incentive Program is contribution to the improvements outlined in the Broadway Streetscape Master Plan. By requiring these improvements or a one-time payment contribution to the streetscape fund for off-site advertising signs, the sign district will facilitate the transformation of Broadway through enhancements including pedestrian safety improvements, landscaping, and sidewalk and curb repairs, among other streetscape improvements.

Central City Community Plan, Chapter V. Urban Design

Historic Core	<i>Support and implement the Bringing Back Broadway Initiative to revitalize</i>
Center City	<i>Broadway as a vibrant entertainment and cultural destination for businesses, pedestrians, transit users, shoppers, visitors, residents.</i>

The proposed Broadway Sign District implements the objectives stated in the design chapter of the Central City Plan. The signage regulations related to the design, type, placement, and operation of signs have been designed to enhance Broadway's entertainment and cultural amenities, support ground level businesses, activate vacant upper floors and foster a pedestrian-friendly environment.

2. Zone Change Findings

Public Space Necessity, Convenience, General Welfare, & Good Zoning Practice

Los Angeles **City Charter Section 558** and **LAMC Section 12.32(C)(7)** require that prior to adopting a land use ordinance, the City Council make findings that the ordinance conforms with public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice. The Historic Broadway Sign District ordinance proposes specially tailored dynamic signage regulations that will advance the goals for revitalization of the area by creating an engaging visual environment for visitors and reducing visual blight along the corridor. The Project would enhance the means of promoting the businesses, entertainment venues, and visitor-serving activities and events in the City of Los Angeles. Recommended modifications to the Broadway CDO and Streetscape Master Plan will also help to create a cohesive aesthetic along the corridor and contribute to Downtown's image as a world-class entertainment and tourist destination. As such, the Historic Broadway Sign District conforms to the public necessity, convenience, and general welfare of the city.

The signage regulations reflect good zoning practice in that they include controls on the type, size, height, hours of operation, illumination level, and other physical characteristics of new signs with the Broadway district. Appropriate and balanced sign regulations are necessary to maintain compatibility with surrounding development while fostering a vibrant urban environment. The Sign District would establish regulations that allows signs which are appropriate for the historic context. Illumination standards of the Sign District would minimize potential traffic hazards through regulation of refresh rates on digital display signs and other illumination standards that minimize light pollution.

The proposed Sign District also conforms to good zoning practice in that it establishes signage design criteria, standards, location, and types of permitted and prohibited signs. The Historic Broadway Sign District would minimize visual impacts on the surrounding communities, and no signs would be placed in a manner which would destroy or alter the important historic resources along Broadway.

3. Signage Supplemental Use District Findings

The enabling language for the establishment of Sign Districts contained in **LAMC Section 13.11(B)** requires that the following findings be made:

- a. *Each "SN" District shall include only properties in the C or M Zones, except that R5 Zone properties may be included in a "SN" Sign District provided that the R5 zoned lot is located within an area designated on an adopted community plan as "Regional Center," "Regional Commercial," or "High Intensity Commercial," or within any redevelopment project area.*
- b. *No "SN" District shall contain less than one block or three acres in area, whichever is the smaller.*
- c. *The total acreage in the district shall include contiguous parcels of land which may only be separated by public streets, ways or alleys, or other physical features, or as set forth in the rules approved by the Director of Planning.*

The proposed Historic Broadway Sign District meets all of the above requirements. The proposed district contains only parcels with C2 and C5 Zoning and with a Regional Center Commercial General Plan Land Use Designation. The proposed Sign District contains an area of approximately 58 acres, which includes those parcels that front along Broadway between 1st Street to the north to 12th Street to the south. Finally, the Sign District includes contiguous property which is separated only by public streets, as required by Section 13.11 B.

4. Community Design Overlay Findings

The **Section 13.08(D)(5) of the LAMC** requires that findings be made that the Guidelines and Standards of the Community Design Overlay are consistent with the policies of the adopted Community Plan and the purposes of a Community Design Overlay. The City Planning Commission had adopted such Findings with the initial approval of the Broadway Community Design Overlay (CPC-2009-879-CDO-ZA). The Guidelines and Standards document will be modified only to remove the sections related to signage, which will be now incorporated into the Historic Broadway Sign District. The Broadway Community Design Overlay, as previously adopted, anticipated the creation of future Sign District. The proposed Sign District is consistent with the adopted CDO, the Community Plan, and the requirements of LAMC Section 13.08.

5. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Findings

The City Council finds that the project was assessed in ENV- 2014-2712-MND, adopted on August 13, 2015, and that pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15162, based on the whole of the administrative record, no subsequent EIR or negative declaration is required for approval of the project.