

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 17-0893

Comments for Public Posting: Writing on behalf of Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd. Homeowners Assoc. I wish to repeat our support for the work of the Depts. of Building & Safety, Planning, Public Works, and Office of Community Beautification to clarify and strengthen language designed to halt the continued abuses of the current program by outdoor advertising companies operating to maximize their revenues at the expense of the communities in which their often illegal signage is located. We trust that these revisions will allow for future timely enforcement of the program's requirements. We have previously submitted comment letters related to pending changes to the program which are in the Council File record. It is imperative that revisions to the program halt temporary wall signage installed around operating businesses. Such signage is a clear abuse of the intent of this program and can be seen in many locations around the City. We ask whether explicit language should be added to the changes being made that gives additional examples of prohibited activities. It could include those violations most often seen, such as signage around parking lots, vehicle or other storage uses, auto/vehicle-related uses. We also wish to know whether the City has considered exempting certain types of construction permits from being able to apply for a temporary wall construction sign. The example that comes to mind has to do with a permit being sought to re-stripe a parking lot. Such a permit should not trigger the right to erect a temporary construction wall sign whose presence could be felt for months before and after the re-striping has been done. We agree with the staff recommendations that would not permit temporary wall signage in buildings undergoing renovations or on properties where renovations are taking place when some tenants/occupants remain on site. Those locations should be maintained by the property owners, tenants and/or construction entity involved. While we strongly support the proposed changes, we do not understand why our additional suggestions have been ignored to date and would like to request that AFTER adopting the current set of recommendations, that the PLUM Committee request that the staff prepare a report that would address these additional refinements: 1) A requirement of public posting of the permit information stating permit number, issuance date, expiration date, rules governing the permit (requirements for graffiti and trash

removal) and the City's Office of Beautification so that the public can report to the City observed violations of the permit. Without having knowledge of a permit holder's responsibilities or a way to report failure to comply, the City will lack the information it needs to enforce and when considering a potential permit renewal request. Further, failure to comply should also trigger fines and permit revocation when infractions are properly documented. There is currently a lack of accountability and inadequate enforcement capability. The public who live with these signs should be able to be empowered to report and seek enforcement in a timely manner. There is a language change in the ordinance pertaining to notification to a sign company as to the time allowed to respond to an enforcement action. Since the outdoor advertising company is responsible for the regular monitoring of the location for graffiti and trash, would it be advisable to have a notice of or copy of any enforcement notifications to be posted on site (alongside the required permit information)? 2) We have previously requested that the City require the placement of periodic cut outs (open or screened) in these walls to ensure public safety and program compliance. Some sights are better secured than others. When properties can be accessed by unintended individuals, activities conducted behind the walls can be a public safety hazard for those willingly and/or unwillingly involved. These walls can conceal illicit and/or dangerous activity. Additionally, can inspectors see whether or not business activity is taking place on a specific property if a site has been completely surrounded by barriers? 3) Is there an adequate fee structure associated with the issuance of a temporary wall sign permit to allow for at least one unannounced inspection of the signage? 4) Can escalating penalty fines/fees be assessed on those operators who repeatedly violate the program? 5) Is there adequate language in the code which forbids any lighted temporary wall signage? In addition to banning any digital or changing signage, temporary wall signs should not be illuminated. 6) Is there a limit to the number of renewals / re-issued permits possible at a given site? If not, there should be. The program is meant to be a temporary program and neighborhoods via their neighborhood councils should have the right to object to a renewal that exceeds a defined maximum number of months. 7) No posts should face residential properties