



Coalition  
to

**Ban Billboard Blight**

DEFEND OUR PUBLIC SPACES

• PROTECT OUR VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

PLUM Committee  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

VIA EMAIL: [clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org](mailto:clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org)

**RE: Support for proposed amendments to Temporary Signs on Construction Walls Code Council File 17-0893 – Feb. 27, 2018 PLUM Agenda**

Dear Chairperson Huizar and Committee Members Englander, Blumenfield, Harris-Dawson and Price:

The Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight (CBBB) thanks the Planning Dept. and Dept. of Building and Safety for working to bring forth the proposed amendments to the code governing temporary signs on construction walls. We are fully in support of the recommendations and urge their adoption as soon as possible as they address shortcomings in the current regulations that undermine enforcement of the code. While we fully support the proposed amendments, we would like to call your attention to issues associated with the temporary construction wall sign program that have not yet been addressed. We have taken this opportunity to offer some recommendations for your consideration.

Unfortunately, the revisions to the construction wall ordinance do not address a huge and growing part of the problem our neighborhoods across the City are experiencing which is the proliferation of UNPERMITTED wall signs. These barricades and signs are constructed without any permits. Once cited and given orders to comply and to remove the signs, those involved remove the signage for re-inspection only to re-install them following re-inspection! While this scenario was not the target of the amendments, it is imperative for the City to adopt measures to halt this destructive cycle that blights communities and undermines the orderly administration of the construction wall sign program. What can the City do to pursue and halt these repeat violators?

How can a community know if signage on temporary construction walls is permitted? There is currently no way to differentiate the illegal postings from those that are permitted. We would like to recommend that mandatory posting of permit information be required along with details as to the permit term, requirements for graffiti removal, and Office of Beautification/DBS contact information to be used when violations are noted. Additionally, the actual physical structures should be required to have small viewing windows (at least one on each side) that would allow inspectors and passersby to view the enclosed lot. This is a matter of public safety as much as it is a way to more easily monitor compliance.

CBBB has taken action in the past to protect our Scenic Roadways from signage that compromises these roadways that have defined protections in our City's General Plan related to signage. Those same protections should serve to ensure that there are no signs permitted to be

placed on temporary construction walls on scenic roadways.

We would ask that there be added language in the proposed amendments that will better clarify what constitutes an “active construction site.” We are aware of numerous instances where parking lots, vehicle storage lots, equipment storage lots have been surrounded by sign covered walls. As these uses are active uses and do not comply with the code, it would be helpful to call them out as specific examples of prohibited uses in the measure’s text.

With growing installations of utility boxes on our sidewalks and parkways, we have seen these installations become magnets for graffiti. We would suggest that the amendments include language that specifically makes reference to utility boxes and sidewalks as locations to be monitored by permit holders for graffiti removal. (There are other examples enumerated in the regulations.)

Violations of this measure will be met with the penalties delineated in the proposed revisions to the City’s Sign Ordinance. It is critical that the recommended administrative penalties for violations be adopted and applied to this program. Just as there are annual inspection fees required for billboards, is it advisable to have an inspection fee levied on this class of signage to allow for more consistent and proactive enforcement?

The intent of this program was to reduce the blight of untended lots and unmaintained construction sites. Yet, there are neighborhoods across the City who view this program as one that delivers sign/visual blight to their streets. The gray plywood walls have become a particular issue when multiple installations are located in close proximity to one another. Some communities would rather see an empty lot than a wall of commercial signage. They would like the City to hold property owners responsible for the maintenance of their property and the removal of graffiti from their property. Having an “opt out” option for communities is a concept that has been raised in a number of venues.

On behalf of the communities and neighborhood councils with whom we work, we would like to request that PLUM provide us all with a minimum of two weeks’ notice on agenda items related to signage. Our communities and CBBB constituents have strong interest in the policies that the City adopts pertaining to signage. 72 hours’ notice does not allow adequate time/notice for communities to review recently released staff reports, to adopt positions and/or to make necessary arrangements to attend City hearings. As you are well aware, neighborhood councils are subject to the Brown Act and need a minimum of a month’s time in order to adopt a position/CIS statement.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patrick Frank, President

cc: Mike Bonin, Yi Lu