

ORDINANCE NO. []

THE OLYMPIA SIGN DISTRICT

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An ordinance establishing The Olympia Sign District pursuant to the provisions of Section 13.11 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC).

WHEREAS, the Olympia District will be located in the Downtown Center, where the General Plan Framework calls for the continuation and expansion of commercial, residential, transportation, entertainment, and visitor-serving functions that distinguish and uniquely identify the Downtown Center;

WHEREAS, the Sign District is located directly across Olympic Boulevard from LA Live and the Staples Center, near the Los Angeles Convention Center (LACC) and rail transit, and in proximity to several hotels and entertainment venues where unique sign regulations are required to accommodate the convention, entertainment, community, and business character of the properties in and around the Sign District;

WHEREAS, the Sign District is adjacent to the area subject to the existing Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District (LASED) Specific Plan, which includes creative, animated, and other extensive signage rights for properties within the LASED, and development within the LASED has served as a catalyst for investment in the Central City as a key destination for business, entertainment, and cultural activities

WHEREAS, additional urban infill and redevelopment, including hotels, convention center, multi-family residential, commercial and retail uses, and infrastructure projects on and around the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District (LASED) continues to transform the South Park neighborhood into a vibrant area comprised of world-class entertainment venues, creative signage, expanded convention facilities, regional attractions, and residential uses with a distinct demographic and aesthetic identity;

WHEREAS, the Sign District will foster a vibrant urban environment with a unified aesthetic and sense of identity, by setting standards for uniform signage design, providing well-planned placement of signage with consideration for surrounding uses, while also providing functional way-finding and building identification along streets, thereby connecting regional transit, entertainment, and LACC areas;

WHEREAS, the Sign District includes the Olympia mixed-use project, which is designed to serve the housing and the hotel needs of the City, and require unique digital displays to be consistent with the adjacent LASED and further evolve the physical and aesthetic identity of the area for residents, visitors, and businesses in the Central City area and further promote the entertainment character of the Sign District and surrounding areas

WHEREAS, the permitting of off-site signs and digital displays at the site will directly advance the purposes of improving the aesthetics of the area by carefully regulating the placement and design of such signs; and

WHEREAS, on xx, xx, 20xx, the City Council initiated the Sign District (CF xx-xx) and instructed the Planning Department to xxxx (eg. *implement the process to create a sign district that establishes a unique identity between the LACC, LASED, the project, the South Park community, on 3.5 acres that comprise the Sign District area described in this Ordinance.*

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OLYMPIA SIGN DISTRICT.

A. Authority and Scope. As of the Effective Date of this Ordinance, the City Council hereby establishes The Olympia Sign District (District), which shall be applicable to that area of the City shown on Map 1 for the area bounded by James M. Wood Boulevard to the north, Olympic Boulevard to the south, the 110 Freeway and Bixel Street to the west, and Georgia Street to the east. Pursuant to LAMC Section 13.11 B, the District is hereby established in the C2 zone encompassing the project area.

Map 1

Sign District Map

Map 1 follows this page.

Section 2. PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES.

A. Purposes and Objectives.

1. Support and enhance the land uses and urban design objectives in the Central City Community Plan;
2. Encourage vibrant, clear, attractive, well-designed signage that enhances the District while complementing and protecting the character of the surrounding areas by limiting visual clutter;
3. Ensure that new off-site signs and digital displays are responsive to and integrated with the aesthetic character of the structures on which they are located; and
4. Coordinate the location, size, illumination, and sign motion, sign animation and display of Signs so as to minimize potential traffic hazards and protect public safety.

Section 3. APPLICATION OF SIGN DISTRICT REGULATIONS.

A. Relationship to the Los Angeles Municipal Code. This Ordinance regulates Signs within the District. The regulations of this Ordinance are in addition to those set forth in the planning and zoning provisions of the LAMC. Wherever this Ordinance contains provisions that are different from, more restrictive than or more permissive than permitted by the LAMC, this Ordinance shall prevail and supersede the other applicable provisions, including, but not limited to, the requirements of Section 12.32, 13.11, et seq., Section 14.4.1, et seq.

B. On-Site and Off-Site Signs. The three Signs hereby approved in this Ordinance, and all Signs listed in Section 14.4.2 of the LAMC, which are not otherwise prohibited by this Ordinance, shall be allowed. Notwithstanding any other provision of the LAMC or this Ordinance, the three Signs approved in this Ordinance may be either an On-Site Sign or Off-Site Sign as such terms are defined in this Ordinance. This Ordinance governs all aspects of Signs that are Off-Site Signs within the District. On-Site Signs located within this Sign District shall be permitted subject to compliance with Article 4.4 of Chapter 1 of the LAMC.

Section 4. DEFINITIONS.

Whenever the following terms are used in this Ordinance, they shall be construed as defined in this Section. Notwithstanding Section 13.11 of the LAMC, words and phrases not defined herein shall be construed as defined in Sections 12.03 and Article 4.4 of the LAMC.

Administrative Clearance. A determination by the Director pursuant to Section 5.C of this Ordinance of a Sign's compliance with this Ordinance either as submitted or with conditions imposed to achieve compliance.

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

Conceptual Sign Drawings. The conceptual Sign locations, plans, elevations, and renderings depicting the approved locations and types of permanent primary Signs within the District attached to this Ordinance as Appendices B and C, as the same may be modified or amended from time to time in accordance with Section 5.D of this Ordinance.

Refresh Rate. The Refresh Rate is the rate at which a Digital Display may change content.

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.

Controlled Refresh Rate. The refresh rate of a Sign, inclusive of any change in whole or in part of the Sign image, which shall be no more frequent than one refresh event every eight seconds, with an instant transition between images. The Sign image must remain static between refreshes

Non-Controlled Refresh Rate. The refresh rate of all Digital Displays that are not made subject to a Controlled Refresh Rate pursuant to this Ordinance, and which shall permit images, videos, animation, parts and/or illumination that flash, change, move, stream, scroll, blink or otherwise incorporate motion at an unrestricted rate.

Off-Site Sign. A Sign that displays any message directing attention to a business, product, service, profession, commodity, activity, event, person, institution or any other commercial message, which is generally conducted, sold, manufactured, produced, offered or occurs elsewhere than within the District.

On-Site Sign. A Sign that is other than an Off-Site Sign.

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.

Supergraphic Sign. A sign which consists of an image, with or without written text, which is applied to and made integral with a wall, projected onto a wall, illuminated by LED or other pixilated lighting where permitted, or printed on vinyl, mesh, window film, or other material supported and attached to a wall or window by an adhesive and/or by using stranded cable and eye-bolts and/or other materials or methods

Section 5. PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS.

A. Building Permits. The Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) shall not issue a permit for a Sign within the District unless it is authorized by Section 5 of this Ordinance when the Sign complies with:

1. The requirements of this Ordinance as determined by the Director of the Department of City Planning (Director); and
2. Applicable requirements of the LAMC that are not otherwise superseded by this Ordinance.

B. Director Sign-Off Required. LADBS may issue a permit for the following types of signs with only a Director sign off on a sign permit application with the Sign District:

1. Identification Signs
2. Monument/Pillar Signs
3. Projecting Signs
4. Wall Signs

The Director shall sign off on the permit application if the sign complies with all of the applicable requirements of this Ordinance and Exhibits and the applicable requirements of the Code. The Director's approval shall also be indicated by stamping the permit plans.

C. Exempt Signs. The following sign types shall be subject to LADBS review and the relevant requirements of the Code, but are exempt from Director's review and do not require a Director's permit sign-off:

1. Interior Signs
2. Original Art Murals
3. Public Art Installations
4. Temporary signs
5. Window Signs

D. Application. An Applicant requesting review of one or multiple Signs for conformity with this Ordinance or, if required or permitted hereby, a Project Permit Compliance or modification thereto, a Project Permit Adjustment, or an exception to, or interpretation of this Ordinance, shall submit the following to the Director in addition to those items specified in Section 11.5.7-B.2(a) of the LAMC:

E. Administrative Clearance.

1. **Required.** LADBS shall not issue a permit for any Off-Site Signs, unless the Director has issued an Administrative Clearance pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section 12.32.S.4 of the LAMC.
2. **Exception.** No Administrative Clearance or modification thereto or any Project Permit Adjustment or any exception, amendment or interpretation of this Ordinance shall be required for:

- a. Construction, operation, maintenance, repair, replacement or structural alteration of any Approved Sign, or Temporary Sign and each Sign Support Structure associated with such Signs;
 - b. A change in Sign advertising or Sign text, images or copy;
 - c. Any construction for which a permit is required in order to comply with an order issued by LADBS to repair or replace an unsafe or substandard condition;
 - d. A modification to any Sign, Approved Sign, any Sign Support Structure or to the Conceptual Sign Drawings that results in:
 - (i) A change of a Sign from a Digital Display to a Non-Digital Display, or
 - (ii) Relocation of any such Sign if it is consistent with the location requirements in Section 7.C.1 of this Ordinance and complies with Total Off-Site Sign Area limitations in Section 7 of this Ordinance.
3. **Definitions.** For purposes of any review required by this Ordinance pursuant to Section 11.5.7 of the LAMC, the term “specific plan,” wherever used in Section 11.5.7 of the LAMC, shall be deemed to refer to this Ordinance and the term “Project” shall be deemed to refer, as the case may be, to a “Sign” or to the “Conceptual Sign Plan.”
4. **Process; Decision-Making Authority.** Requests for Project Permit Adjustment, Administrative Clearance or for an exception, amendment or interpretation of this Ordinance shall be made in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 11.5.7 and 12.32.S.4 of the LAMC; provided, however, that notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 11.5.7.6 through F and H of the LAMC, in each case where the Area Planning Commission has the authority for initial review, hearing and/or approval of a request for Project Permit Adjustment, or an exception, or interpretation of this Ordinance, the Director shall have initial decision-making authority for granting each of the foregoing.

F. Visual Environment Improvement Program

Sign reduction is required for all Off-Site Signs in compliance with the regulations of this Section. An applicant shall seek sign reduction approval by filing an application with the Director pursuant to Section 11.5.7 of the LAMC:

- A. **Removal of Off-Site Signage.** A maximum of three Digital Display Signs may be permitted to be Off-Site Signs, subject to the following sign reduction requirements, which shall be satisfied prior to the activation of any Off-Site Digital Display Sign.
 - 1. **Sign Credit.** A minimum of ten square feet of existing, legally permitted Off-Site Sign shall be removed for one square foot of sign area credit for an Off-Site Digital Display Sign within the Sign District.

2. **Location.** Each Off-Site Sign that is removed shall be located within the sign impact area (the Central City, Westlake, Southeast Los Angeles, South Los Angeles Community Plan areas, or within the boundary of Council District 14).
- B. **Proof of Legal Status, Removal Rights and Indemnification.** Sign reduction shall not be approved unless the applicant submits the following with the application form:
 - i. **Valid Building Permit.** A valid building permit demonstrating that the sign to be removed constitutes a legal use.
 - ii. **Property Owner's Statement.** A written statement from the owner of the property from which the sign(s) will be removed attesting that the owner has the legal right to remove the sign at issue and agrees that once removed the sign(s) at issue may not be reinstated. This written statement must be signed under penalty of perjury and notarized.
 - iii. **Indemnification.** An executed agreement from the applicant promising to defend and indemnify the City against any and all legal challenges filed by a third party relating to the removal of the sign(s).
 - C. **Proof of Sign Removal.** With respect to each removed Off-Site Sign, the applicant shall submit a final demolition permit (if such permit is required for the sign removal) and photographic evidence that such sign has been removed prior to the issuance of any building permit for an Off-Site Sign.
 - D. **Transfer of Rights.** Signage rights awarded pursuant to this section shall not be used to install signs on any property outside of this District, or in violation of the requirements of this Ordinance. Nor shall the removal of a sign under this Section 5 to obtain sign rights in this sign district be used to also gain sign rights in any other Sign District.

Section 6. APPROVED SIGNS.

This Ordinance approves and authorizes the construction, operation, and use of Approved Signs without further discretionary action, except subject to Section 5 of this Ordinance.

Section 7. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.

A. General Requirements of the LAMC. A building permit shall be obtained from LADBS in accordance with the applicable provisions of LAMC, for any signs, sign structures, and/or sign alterations, other than changes to or replacement of sign face copy.

B. Permitted and Prohibited Signs.

1. **Permitted Signs.** Unless specifically prohibited by this Ordinance, all signs permitted by the LAMC shall be permitted within the District.
2. **Prohibited Signs.** The following signs shall be prohibited:
 - a. Supergraphic signs;

- b. Signs that contain obscene matters, as defined in Section 311 of the Penal Code of the State of California;
- c. Signs that contain or consist of posters, pennants, banners, ribbons, streamers or spinners, captive balloon sign, inflatable device, pole sign, roof sign, sandwich board sign, except as permitted by the LAMC;
- d. Signs that contain flashing, mechanical and strobe lights in conflict with the provisions of LAMC Sections 80.08.4 and 93.0107;
- e. Signs that revolve and where all or any portion rotate at greater than six revolutions per minute;
- f. Signs that are tacked, pasted or otherwise temporarily affixed on the walls of buildings, barns, sheds, trees, poles, posts or fences, except as permitted by the LAMC;
- g. Signs that are affixed to any vehicle or trailer on private property if the vehicle or trailer is not intended to be 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;
- h. Signs that emit audible sounds, odor or visible matter;
- i. Signs that use human beings or live animals in connection with any Sign;
- j. Signs that are inflatable devices; and
- k. Signs that obstruct the free operation of exterior doors, vents, rescue windows or other openings that serve occupants of buildings.
- l. Any off-site sign or digital display not identified in this ordinance.

C. General Sign Location Requirements. The following general Sign location provisions shall be in addition to the provisions set forth in Section 7 of this Ordinance.

1. **Location.** A Sign affixed to a structure shall be deemed to be in compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance with respect to location if the Sign's location is as depicted on the Conceptual Sign Drawings in Appendices B and C, or within 10 percent of the height or width of the façade (in feet) of that location.
2. **Signs B and C** Signs B and C as shown on Conceptual Sign Drawings in Appendices B and C shall not be permitted.

D. Hazard Review. Signs that adhere to the regulations outlined in this Ordinance shall be exempt from the Hazard Determination review procedures in the LAMC.

E. Freeway Exposure. Signs that adhere to the regulations outlined in this Ordinance shall be exempt from the Freeway Exposure regulations in the LAMC.

F. Illumination.

1. **Generally.** Signs within the District may be illuminated by either internal or external means. Methods of Sign illumination may include but are not limited to electric lamps, such as neon tubes; fiber optics; incandescent lamps; LED; LCD; cathode ray tubes exposed directly to view; shielded spot lights; and wall wash fixtures.
2. **Regulations.** Signs shall meet the following criteria with respect to illumination:
 - a. The intensity of each digital display shall be controlled with a photocell with an adjustable set-point that measures available daylight. This set-point shall be used to control the intensity of the Sign output to either the daytime or nighttime brightness standards set forth below.
 - b. The brightness of any digital display that includes neon, neon-like, or LED elements shall be fully dimmable and controlled by a timer, which shall be maintained in good working order.
 - c. All illuminated Signs shall be designed, located, and/or screened so as to minimize light travel onto the exterior walls of residential units and the public right-of-way.
 - d. All light emitting diodes used within any illuminated Sign shall have a maximum horizontal beam spread of 165 degrees with a max vertical beam spread of 65 degrees. The maximum or peak light output of any Sign shall be at or below horizontal.
 - e. Light emitting diodes on Signs shall be oriented down towards the street, rather than up towards the sky, or Signs should be provided with a method of shielding diodes so that lighting is not wasted shining into the night sky.
 - f. **Illumination Testing Protocol for Digital Displays.** Prior to the operation of any Digital Display, the applicant shall conduct testing to indicate compliance with the illumination regulations of this Ordinance, and provide a copy of the results along with a certification from an LADBS approved testing agency to the Director and to LADBS stating that the testing results demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance. The testing shall be at the applicant's expense and shall be conducted as follows:
 - i. **Testing.** In order to determine whether the illumination complies with the Code and the requirements of this Ordinance, a representative testing site shall be established on or next to those light sensitive receptors, as defined by the City's CEQA Guidelines, which have the greatest exposure to signage lighting on each of the four facades of the Project. A light meter mounted to a tripod at eye level, facing the Project buildings, shall be calibrated and measurements taken to determine ambient light levels with the sign on. An opaque object shall be used to block out the view of the sign and the building from the light meter at a distance of at least four (4) feet

away from the tripod. A reading shall then be taken to determine the ambient light levels with the sign off. The difference between the two measurements shall be the amount of light the sign casts onto the sensitive receptor. Alternatively, the applicant may measure light levels by using the same tripod and same light meter, but by turning the signage on and off.

- ii. **Metering.** The illumination and intensity levels of all Digital Displays shall also be metered from a minimum of four perspectives (i.e., a perspective metering each facade) using the Candela as unit of measurement, and shall indicate conformance with the standards of this Ordinance.
- iii. **Re-testing.** In addition, if, as a result of a complaint or otherwise, LADBS has cause to believe the Project's signage lighting is not in compliance with this Ordinance, LADBS may request, at the expense of the applicant or its successor, that the testing protocol outlined in this section be implemented to determine compliance. If the testing reveals that the signage is not in compliance with the Code, this Ordinance, or Mitigation Measures set both in the Environmental Clearance that the City certified for this Ordinance, the applicant or its successor shall adjust the signage illumination to bring it into compliance immediately.
- iv. **Reporting Program.** The applicant shall, at their expense, submit a report to LADBS and the Department of City Planning documenting compliance with the provisions of this section six months after obtaining a certificate of occupancy, and every 12 months after.

g. Sign Location A

- i. Illuminance from signs shall not exceed 0.3 footcandles above ambient illuminance.
 - ii. Signs at Location A shall have a brightness after sunset and before sunrise of no greater than 300candelas per square meter.
- h. All Signs shall transition smoothly at a consistent rate from the daytime illuminance to the permitted nighttime illuminance levels, beginning 45 minutes prior to sunset and concluding 45 minutes after sunset.

3. **Refresh Rate.**

- a. Digital Display A is subject to Controlled Refresh Rate.

4. **Sign Hours of Operation.** Permitted hours of operation for Digital Displays shall be from 5 a.m. to midnight.

G. Visual Maintenance. All Signs shall be maintained to meet the following criteria at all times:

1. The building and ground area around all Signs shall be properly maintained. All unused mounting structures, hardware, and wall perforation from any abandoned Sign shall be removed and building surfaces shall be restored to their original condition.
2. All Sign copy shall be properly maintained and kept free from damage and other unsightly conditions, including graffiti.
3. All Sign Support Structures shall be kept in good repair and maintained in a safe and sound condition and in conformity with all applicable codes.
4. Razor wire, barbed wire, concertina wire, or other barriers preventing unauthorized access to any Sign, if any, shall be hidden from public view.
5. The Sign copy must be repaired or replaced immediately upon tearing, ripping, or peeling, or when marred or damaged by graffiti.
6. No access platform, ladder, or other service appurtenance, visible from the sidewalk, street, or public right-of-way, shall be installed or attached to any Sign Support Structure.
7. Signs that are no longer serving the current tenants, including Sign Support Structures, shall be removed and the building facades originally covered by the Signs shall be repaired and/or resurfaced with materials and colors that are compatible with the facades.
8. Any Sign that includes individual or corporate names as part of the building identification shall be designed so as to present internally consistent and internally proportionate Sign copy.
9. Signs that include individual or corporate names shall utilize lettering size and styles which are generally uniform, in order that all words or names within the Sign are not of a significantly different scale than the rest of the Sign copy.

Section 8. STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF SIGNS.

A. Digital Displays.

1. **General.** Digital Displays shall be subject to the refresh rate and illumination regulations set forth in Section 7 of this Ordinance.
2. **Illumination.** Digital Displays and Integral Digital Displays shall comply with the illumination requirements in Section 7 of this Ordinance.

Section 9. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity shall

not affect other provisions, clauses or applications of said Ordinance, which can be implemented without the invalid provision, clause or application, and to this end, the provisions and clauses of this Ordinance are declared to be severable.

Appendix A
Approved Signs

Appendix B

Conceptual Sign Locations

Appendix C
Conceptual Sign Drawings