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Submitted in PLUM Committee
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Item No.: 5
Deputy: Planning

Additional Recommended Changes
Proposed Sign Ordinance
PLUM 8/9/2011

There were several corrections and potential changes to the proposed ordinance that came to light after its publication on July 22. Of these, the items that do not require further study are recommended to be changed in the proposed ordinance now, and are detailed on this list of additional recommended changes.

A summary of these changes is as follows:

1. A series of technical corrections, most of which were recommended by the Department of Building and Safety, to improve the clarity of provisions relating to:
 - the removal of an existing by-right exception for roof sign height;
 - the clarification of the definition of building frontage for walls that are not parallel to the street;
 - the walls of interior courts that contain signage;
 - the retention of the current regulations on freeway exposure;
 - the sign area allowed on multiple faces of pole signs and projecting signs;
 - the measurement of sign lighting by an agency approved by the Dept of Building & Safety;
 - the mailing of orders to comply;
 - the grace period of 15 days before which penalties may be charged;
 - and the waiving of penalties during the appeal process if the sign copy is removed.
2. Clarification of the provisions regarding the transferability of credits for removal of existing off-site signs.
3. An exception from the sign reduction requirement for off-site signs used to incentivize blight reduction within a National Register Historic District, when such sign comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
4. The conformance of the definition of an on-site sign with the state definition.
5. The allowance of wall signs over building openings when the Fire Department determines that the sign would not create a hazardous condition.
6. The allowance of Comprehensive Sign Programs within overlay areas.
7. Clarification of the rules pertaining to the "grandfathering" of pending Sign District and Specific Plan applications.
8. The revision, per a revised analysis of processing time and labor costs, of the fee for a Comprehensive Sign Program, to \$31, 316.

The recommended changes, in detail, are as follows:

1. Section 13.11 C:

- Amend paragraph 4 to read:

4. Credits for removal of an off-site signs shall be awarded to the owner of the property owner from which the off-site sign has been removed. Such credits can then be used to acquire rights to establish new off-site signage. The holder of sign credits may transfer them to another person or entity.

- Add a new paragraph 5 to read:

5. Sign reduction shall not be required in "SN" Sign Districts where off-site sign rights are being used to incentivize blight reduction through the rehabilitation of buildings within a National Register Historic District and approved signs are determined by the City's Office of Historic Resources to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. In such Sign Districts, off-site sign rights may be granted only after the completion of a rehabilitation project, as that term is defined in the ordinance that creates the Sign District.

2. Add a new Section 4 to the proposed ordinance, and renumber subsequent Sections accordingly. Section 4 shall read:

Paragraph (c) of Subdivision 3 of Subsection B of Section 12.21.1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is deleted.

3. Section 14.4.2, Definitions. Add the following language to the definition of building frontage:

- **Building Frontage.** The projection of the exterior building walls upon the street used for street frontage, as measured perpendicular to the edge of the street. For walls that are not parallel to the street, the building frontage shall be measured along the wall that, other than open parking spaces, has direct and unimpeded access to the street.
- **On-Site Sign.** A sign that is used exclusively to advertise business conducted or services rendered or goods produced or sold on the lot upon which the sign is placed.

4. Section 14.4.3.A, Scope: Change the last sentence of the "Exception" paragraph to read:

EXCEPTION: Signs or sign support structures shall not be considered exterior if they face an interior court bounded on all sides by one or more nontranslucent buildings or walls on the property, and no sign is higher than any of the surrounding buildings or walls. Surrounding walls may have necessary openings for ingress and egress provided the sign is not or is visible from any public right of way or adjacent property.

5. Section 14.4.5, Freeway Exposure: The language for this section should be exactly the same as the current code.
6. Section 14.4.8, Projecting Signs: Change the last clause of Paragraph B1 to read:

The sign area of projecting signs visible to the same direction of traffic shall not exceed 25 square feet plus 1.5 square feet for each foot of street frontage on which the signs are located, up to a maximum sign area of 300 square feet for one face and 600 square feet on all faces combined.

7. Section 14.4.11, Pole Signs: Change Paragraph B2 to read:

The maximum area of any one pole sign shall not exceed 400 square feet for one face and 800 square feet on all faces combined.

8. Section 14.4.9, Wall Signs:

- Change Paragraph C3 to read:

No wall sign shall be placed over the exterior surface of any opening of a building, including its windows, doors, and vents, unless the Fire Department determines that the sign would not create a hazardous condition.

- Change Paragraph C4 to read:

No wall sign shall cross the perimeter of any opening of a building, including its windows, doors, and vents, at any point 24 inches or less of the exterior building face measured perpendicularly to the surface of the opening; unless the Fire Department determines that the sign would not create a hazardous condition.

9. Section 14.4.19, Digital Displays: Change Paragraph C to read:

Measurements performed by a testing agency approved by the Department of Building and Safety shall be provided by the owner of the sign and submitted to the Department of Building and Safety when requested by that Department.

10. Section 14.4.24, Comprehensive Sign Programs: Change Paragraph B2 to read:

A comprehensive sign program cannot be requested for property within an established Sign District or within the area of any Specific Plan or Overlay that contains special signage regulations.

11. Section 14.4.26, Violations and Administrative Civil Penalties

- Amend Paragraph B5 to read:

~~The order to comply shall be posted in a conspicuous location on the premises where the violation has occurred and~~ mailed via U.S. first class mail to each responsible party.

- Amend Paragraph B6 to read:

Penalties are due and payable within 15 days of the date postmarked on the mailing in which the order to comply is sent, unless the violation is corrected before midnight on the 15th day after the postmarked date.

- Add a new paragraph 8, and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly:

If a responsible party appeals a penalty, the penalty shall not accrue for as long as the sign copy has been removed.

12. Sec. 13 of the proposed ordinance, "Grandfathering":

- Initiated or Applied for Sign Districts:

Any initiated or applied for Sign District shall be subject to the Sign District regulations in this Code as of August 9, 2011, rather than to the subsequently updated regulations.

An "initiated or applied for Sign District" is one which was not approved before August 9, 2011 but was initiated or applied for before this date, pursuant to Section 12.32 of this Code; or any Sign District for which precise geographically defined boundaries were identified in a notice of preparation for an environmental impact report for which a notice of preparation was posted by the Department of City Planning before August 9, 2011.

After an initiated or applied for Sign District is adopted, any proposed amendments that would allow signs prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of

this Code shall be subject to the Sign District provisions in this Code at the time such regulations amendments are proposed.

- Initiated or Applied for Specific Plans:

Within any initiated or applied for specific plan, any regulations that ~~permit signs prohibited by Section 14.4.4 C of this Code governing signage~~ shall be removed from the proposed specific plan and ~~established within set forth in~~ a proposed Sign District. The proposed Sign District shall be reviewed concurrently with the specific plan, shall not require an application fee, and shall be subject to the ~~Sign District regulations~~ regulations governing specific plans in this Code as of August 9, 2011, rather than the ~~subsequently updated~~ regulations governing Sign Districts.

An "initiated or applied for specific plan" is one which was not approved before August 9, 2011 but was initiated or applied for before this date, pursuant to Section 12.32 of this Code; or any specific plan for which ~~precise geographically defined~~ boundaries were identified ~~in a notice of preparation for a an~~ environmental impact report for which a notice of preparation was posted by the Department of City Planning before August 9, 2011.

After an initiated or applied for specific plan is adopted and a Sign District is adopted as provided above, any proposed regulations amendments to the Sign District shall be subject to the Sign District provisions in this Code at the time such regulations amendments are proposed.

13. Sec. 14 of the proposed ordinance: Fees

Change the fee for a Comprehensive Sign Program to \$31,316.

“Grandfathering” of Pending Sign Districts and Specific Plans --AUG. 2011 UPDATE--

There are currently 14 pending Sign Districts or Specific Plans where special sign allowances are pending that would allow sign types prohibited by the proposed sign ordinance. These areas would be impacted by the new sign ordinance, unless they are “grandfathered”, or allowed to continue through the review and hearing process under the existing sign regulations. These 14 “pipeline projects” consist of:

- Five proposed Sign Districts initiated by private property owners’ applications
- Three proposed Sign Districts initiated by City Council motions
- Six areas for which an existing Specific Plan or special ordinance is requested to be amended to change the signage allowed

The City Planning Commission (CPC), in its March 26, 2009 approval of the proposed sign ordinance, approved the grandfathering of two proposed Sign Districts. These two pending Sign Districts were approved for grandfathering because they had already been approved by the CPC prior to its approval of the new sign ordinance:

- Figueroa and Olympic Sign District (approved by CPC on 12/11/08)
- Seward addition to the Hollywood Sign District (approved by CPC on 2/24/09)

The tables below present information on the 14 “pipeline projects” with pending special signage allowances addressed by Sec. 13 of the proposed ordinance under consideration by PLUM on August 9, 2011.

Pending Sign Districts Initiated by Private Property Owners’ Applications:

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Council District</i>	<i>Case Number</i>	<i>Date of Application</i>	<i>Status</i>
Metro Universal	West side of Lankershim between the 101 & Valley Hear Dr; both sides of Campo De Cahuenga between the 101 & Lankershim	4	CPC-2008-3512-GPA-ZC-HD-BL-SN-CUB-CUW-CU-ZAD-SPR	8/22/08	Pending review by Planning Department
Metropolis	Bounded by the 110 to the west, 110 offramp to the south, Francisco St to the east, and 8th St to the north	9	CPC-2008-4557-SN	11/10/08	Pending review by Planning Department
Mid-Town Crossing	San Vicente & Pico to San Vicente & Venice	10	CPC-2008-2614-SN	6/26/08	CPC hearing on 5/14/09
Figueroa and Olympic	Block bounded by 9th St to the north, Flower to the east, Olympic to the south, and Figueroa to the west	9	CPC-2007-842-SN	2/16/07	CPC approved on 12/11/08; PLUM approved on 2/10/09; awaiting CCL hrg
Seward addition to Hollywood Sign Dist.	West side of Seward bounded by Romaine to the north & Barton to the south	4	CPC-2008-756-VZC-VCU-CU-CUB-ZV-ZAA-SPR	2/27/08	Approved in part by CPC on 02/24/09; awaiting CCL hearing

Pending Sign Districts Initiated by City Council Motions:

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Council District</i>	<i>Council File Number</i>	<i>Mover and Date of Motion</i>	<i>Status</i>
City West	Bounded by 1st St to the north, Boylston to the west, 3rd St to the south, and Beaudry to the east	1	CF# 08-0509	Councilmember Reyes, 3/04/08. Adopted 4/30/08	Pending with Planning Department
Koreatown	Bounded generally by 6th St to the north, St. Andrews Pl to the west, Olympic Bl to the south, and Shatto Pl to the east	10	CF# 08-0936	Councilmember Wesson, 4/15/08 Adopted 6/13/08	Pending with Planning Department
Figueroa Corridor	East and west sides of Figueroa Street generally between Olympic and Wilshire Boulevards.	9	CF#11-0273	Councilmember Perry, 02/18/11	Pending with Planning Department

Areas that have an existing Specific Plan or special ordinance that is requested to be amended to change the signage allowed:

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Council District</i>	<i>Existing Ordinance</i>	<i>Case Number</i>	<i>Status</i>
Convention Center Modernization and Farmers Field Event Center	Bounded generally by 9 th St to the north, Flower St to the east, Venice Blvd to the south, and the 110 to the west	9	No. 172,465	CPC-2008-3374	To be heard by hearing officer on 5/29/09 (tentative)
USC Specific Plan	Greater Downtown Los Angeles area, including the community surrounding the University of Southern California (USC)	8,9	N/A	CF#08-2620	Case Filed on 1/28/09 FEIR Distribution: 7/05/11
Boyle Heights Mixed Use (Wyvernwood)	2901 E. Olympic Boulevard, 90023	14	N/A	CPC-2010-851-SP	Case Filed on 5/28/08
Los Angeles International Airport	Los Angeles International Airport	11	N/A	CPC-2011-1964-SN	Case Filed on 8/2/11
NBC/Universal Evolution Plan	100 - 100 UNIVERSAL CITY PZ, 91608	4	N/A	CPC-2007-251-GPA-ZC-SP	Case Filed on 1/18/2007
Warner Center Specific Plan	6551 N DE SOTO AVE, 91303	3	No. 168,873 (et. seq.)	ENV-2008-3471-EIR	Case Filed on 8/21/08