

HOLLY L. WOLCOTT
CITY CLERK

SHANNON HOPPE
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

City of Los Angeles CALIFORNIA



OFFICE OF THE
CITY CLERK

Council and Public Services Division
200 N. Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012
General Information: (213) 978-1133
FAX: (213) 978-1040

BRIAN WALTERS
DIVISION MANAGER

clerk.lacity.org

When making inquiries relative
to this matter, please refer to
Council file No. **11-1705**

ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

May 31, 2017

Honorable Mike Feuer
City Attorney
Attention: Terry Kaufmann-Macias

Richard H. Llewellyn Jr.
Interim City Administrative Officer
Attention: Jason Killeen

Sharon Tso
Chief Legislative Analyst
Attention: Robert Mejia

Vince P. Bertoni
Director of Planning
Attention: Kevin J. Keller

Frank Bush, General Manager
Department of Building and Safety
Attention: John Biezins

REQUEST FOR REPORT

On May 30, 2017, the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee considered a report from the Department of City Planning (DCP) relative to on-site digital signs outside of sign districts and location and status of sign district applications; report from the City Administrative Officer (CAO) relative to a fiscal impact analysis for the DCP Sign Unit and Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) Off-Site Sign Periodic Inspection Program; and report from the LADBS relative to vinyl replacement of painted wall signs by muralist Barry Blue.

During the discussion, the PLUM Committee continued the matter with the following recommendations:

1. INSTRUCT LADBS to report back in 30 days with strategies on securing immediate funding for 2 additional inspection staff as part of the Off-Site Sign Periodic Inspection Program (OSSPIP) program, independent of any expanded fee program that may be associated with the proposed Sign Ordinance.
2. INSTRUCT City Legislative Analyst (CLA) to report back with a peer review of financial analyses for (a) Citywide Option and (b) Public Option as follows:
 - a) Citywide Option Study

- i) Report should include proposed policy framework and land use regulations, including analysis of potential revenue impacts resulting from implementation of 100-foot and 200-foot residential zone buffers.
 - ii) Include analysis of potential revenue impacts resulting from establishing reduction goals of 30% and 50% of the existing off-site signs and potential caps.
 - iii) Include analysis of potential revenue impacts by prohibiting off-site signs in overlay districts.
- b) Public Option Study
- i) Report should include analysis of potential revenue opportunities for a public property ONLY digital billboard program, exclusive to City and Metro owned properties with additional analysis to also include right-of-way opportunities (e.g., bus shelters).
 - ii) Report should examine potential deal structures, such as regional RFP systems with contract terms and ownership rights for the City and potential bidders, in addition to the establishment of possible geographic districts.
 - iii) Report should examine the revenue structure which incorporates the proposed land use regulations applicable to signs subject to relocation agreements and take-down ratios, along with the potential for placement of supergraphic signs on public property sites in existing sign districts.
 - iv) Report should discuss the potential for a citywide cap on digital off-site signs and how that relates to take-down goals for existing static signs.
 - v) Report should discuss a menu of options that potential RFP's should or can include to enhance their bids, with specific options having prescribed point values for the RFP evaluation process. For example, take-downs of static signs above and beyond the proposed requirements should be rewarded with additional points. Community benefits above and beyond the proposed recommendations should be credited additional points.
 - vi) Report should discuss potential environmental review guidelines in accordance with recommendations from the City Attorney and Planning Department.
3. INSTRUCT the DCP with assistance from the City Attorney to report back in 30 days with a determination on the status of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) clearance document associated with the proposed Sign Ordinance.
4. INSTRUCT the DCP with assistance from the City Attorney to incorporate the on-site digital sign regulations consistent with the amended motion as proposed by Councilmember Englander as follows:
- a) Land Use Designation/Zone: The General Plan land use must be designated as Regional Center Commercial, Regional Commercial, General, Highway Oriented, (Community Commercial, Neighborhood Office Commercial, Commercial Manufacturing), and Zoned Commercial.
 - b) Minimum Street Frontage – Property must have a least 150 feet of street frontage.

- c) Sensitive Uses: On-site digital signs cannot be within, and must be at least a 100-foot half-radius distance away from (as measured from the sign face) the following:
 - i) Residential Zones,
 - ii) State or National parks,
 - iii) Ecological preserves,
 - iv) River implementation Overlay (RIO) and
 - v) Scenic Highways.
 - d) On-Site Digital Sign Limitations:
 - i) Total On-Site Digital Sign Area. Up to 75% of a property's sign allotment may be used for on-site digital signs, not to exceed a total of 350 square feet.
 - ii) Maximum On-Site Digital Sign Size. No individual on-site digital sign may exceed 300 square feet.
 - iii) Spacing Between On-Site Digital Signs. The minimum distance between any on-site digital sign and another digital sign, either on-site or off-site, shall be 100 feet.
 - iv) Digital Display Standards. The digital display standards are to be consistent with the illumination standards recommended by the City Planning Commission, which includes a nighttime limit of 300 candelas per square meter.
 - v) On-site Digital Sign Types. Roof on-site digital signs are prohibited.
 - e) Process
 - i) Administrative Approval: Allow on-site digital signs that meet the criteria outlined herewith.
 - ii) Relief: As proposed in the Citywide sign ordinance, a Sign Adjustment to exceed standards by 20% or less and a Sign Variance to exceed standards by more than 20%.
 - iii) The City should continue to require a property owner covenant which limits the use of on-site signs to on-site messages. This covenant shall be attached to the property record and can be utilized in the enforcement process, if necessary.
 - f) Include ability for service stations to use digital integers
5. INSTRUCT the DCP with assistance from the City Attorney to prepare a revised ordinance that would authorize off-site signs outside of sign districts upon City Council approval of a qualified relocation agreement or City contract in compliance with all applicable land use regulations and one that includes findings for BILLBOARD BLIGHT REDUCTIONS as follows:
- a) Amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to require relocation agreements or City contracts subject to Council approval and following restrictions and requirements:
 - i) Relocate agreements to be subject to City Council approval

- ii) Limited to C, M and PF Zones and General Plan land use designation is Regional Center Commercial, Regional Commercial, General Commercial, Highway Oriented Commercial, Community Commercial and Public Facilities
 - iii) Required minimum 2:1 take-down ratio
 - iv) Require Public Benefit payments corresponding to take-down ratios
 - v) Must observe a minimum 200-foot buffer, with exceptions when relocating existing signs
 - vi) Exceptions would require higher take-down minimums at 4:1
 - vii) Must face away from adjacent residential zones
 - viii) Must be located minimum 500 feet away from any other digital off-site sign
 - ix) 250 feet when adjacent to existing sign districts
 - x) Prohibit freeway facing billboards consistent with State/Caltrans regulations except on public properties
 - xi) Prohibit along State designated scenic highways
 - xii) Prohibit in public parks and civic buildings that represent sensitive or historic monument uses
 - xiii) Not to supersede restrictions in existing Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ), specific plan areas and other overlay districts
- b) Maintain grandfathering provisions for pending sign district applications
- c) Relocation agreement application review process to require the following:
- i) Pre-filing consultation requirement with the DCP and impacted Council office
 - ii) CEQA – each relocation agreement to complete project specific CEQA clearance
 - iii) Blight Reduction finding – take-down ratio, public benefit payment, other public benefits (e.g. streetscape/aesthetic improvements, transportation safety related improvements, etc.)
 - Indemnification agreement by applicant against legal challenges
 - iv) Staff to conduct a hearing officer hearing for the purposes of gathering public input, including hearing notice for adjacent property owners and occupants to 500-foot radius
 - v) Staff report and draft relocation agreement transmitted to City Council
 - vi) City Attorney to prepare draft ordinance

- d) Run-to-the-counter controls
 - Establish monthly limit of 2-5 applications per applicant
 - Higher frequency for higher take-down ratios proposed
 - e) Require sign companies notify LADBS/OSSPIP on any transfers/sales of existing signs
6. INSTRUCT the DCP with assistance from the CAO to develop a Citywide **Billboard Blight Reduction** policy document that identifies the following policy goals:
- a) That authorizations of all new off-site digital billboards would require a net reduction, no less than at a 2:1 ratio.
 - b) That all relocation agreements incorporate a **Billboard Blight Reduction Public Benefit Program**, including but not limited to take-down ratios and the corresponding range of Billboard Reduction Public Benefit payments.
 - Take-down ratios range 2:1 to 8:1
 - Public Benefit payments range from 40% at 2:1 to 5% at 8:1
 - 20-year payment terms
 - Options to pay up front in bulk or higher annualized payments
 - c) That any additional Public Benefits proposed, including but not limited to streetscape improvements and transportation safety enhancing improvements, be considered such that the value of the additional benefits would be credited toward the Public Benefit payment, but where the credit would not significantly diminish from the total Public Benefit payment. That the valuation of public benefit contributions would be validated by staff upon submittal of a cost analysis by the applicant.
7. INSTRUCT the CAO to report back in 30 days with a framework for the administration of funds in relation to the Billboard Blight Reduction Public Benefit payments, that incorporates the following:
- a) The establishment of a new Billboard Blight Reduction Fund
 - b) Allocations of the funds where the impacted Council District would receive 50% of the Public Benefit payment into a district specific sub-account and the remaining 50% to be directed to the City's General Fund
 - c) Specific allocations of the portion of funds allocated to the district sub-accounts to be applied toward improvements in the public right-of-way, public facilities improvements, streetscape improvements, transportation safety enhancing improvements, or other transportation related improvements.
8. INSTRUCT the DCP with assistance from the City Attorney, that Section 14.4.24 of the proposed sign ordinance dated December 4, 2012 be amended to add the following language: "Any wall sign

or wall mural approved prior to April 17, 2002 and in regular use for off-site advertising within the Greater Downtown Housing Incentive Area as of December 4, 2012, shall be allowed to continue in such operation and to display changes of copy using paint, vinyl adhesive materials approved by the Department of Building & Safety and the Fire Department, or other such approved materials."

Please prepare a written response as requested by the PLUM Committee. In your response, please reference Council file No. 11-1705. When this matter is scheduled for Committee consideration, your attendance, or that of your designee, is respectfully requested. If you have questions, please contact me at (213) 978-1074 or sharon.dickinson@lacity.org.

Thank you,

Sharon Dickinson
Legislative Assistant
Planning and Land Use Management Committee