



Legislation Text

File #: 09-1206, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Council to adopt a minute order initiating a moratorium on new billboards, super graphics and off-site digital display approvals in the City of Long Beach; and direct Planning Commission and Development Services Department staff to initiate appropriate studies directed to the adoption of new billboard regulations.

Background:

The City currently has zoning regulations that control the size, number and location of billboards. Billboards are defined in the Municipal Code as: "a sign that identifies or communicates a commercial or noncommercial message related to an activity conducted, a service rendered, or a commodity sold at a location other than where the sign is located." Although the Code recognizes that billboards are a legitimate commercial use in the City, there is also recognition that billboards can have a significant negative influence on the City's visual environment. If proper controls and regulations are not in place, the proliferation of billboards can lead to a loss of community character and visual blight, both of which can directly impact the local economy.

The City's billboard regulations have not been significantly updated since 1988. In recent years, technology has seen the introduction of so called "super graphic" billboards that are sometimes affixed to existing buildings and structures and the attempt to convert static billboard displays into large electronic digital message boards. The staff of the Development Services Department and the City Attorneys Office has been drafting new billboard regulations in light of the outdated nature of the existing regulations and the technology innovations discussed above. However, presentation of the proposed regulations to the Planning Commission and later to the City Council for its review and consideration may not come for several months.

Until permanent billboard regulations have been enacted and put into place, it is appropriate that an interim control ordinance (moratorium) be enacted prohibiting the issuance of permits for new off site (billboard) signs, including new off site digital displays and super graphic signs. By enacting a moratorium ordinance the status quo can be maintained until the new regulations can be fully vetted and adopted.

Approve recommendation.

Councilmember Patrick O'Donnell, Fourth District
Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District
Councilman Dee Andrews, Sixth District