



Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council

"Your Community Voice"

December 21, 2015



Councilman Joe Buscaino
Harbor District Office
638 S. Beacon Street, Suite, 552
San Pedro, CA 90731

Ray Regalado
President

Laurie Jacobs
Vice President

Sarah Valdez
Treasurer

Cynthia Gonyea
Secretary

RE: Proposed Sign Ordinance: CF 11-1705

Dear Joe,

At our last meeting, the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council unanimously adopted the attached resolution with regard to the proposed Sign Ordinance. We feel very strongly that both downtown San Pedro (as a regional center) and the Port of Los Angeles should be deleted from that ordinance as potential sign districts. These actions would be consistent with your efforts, which we greatly appreciated, that resulted in the City purchasing the parcel at the end of the Harbor Freeway. Furthermore, at our request, the Port previously paid to remove the billboards on their North Gaffey property. As you are working diligently to improve our community, please do not provide an entree for potentially more billboards.

Additionally, as noted in our resolution, we support the tougher provisions of the Planning Commission and urge you to do so as well. We hope that we can count on you to advocate for these changes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Regalado", is written on a light-colored background.

Ray Regalado
NWSPNC President
on behalf of the Board of Directors of the
Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council

AMENDMENT TO Community Impact Statement

Draft Ordinance regarding the Establishment of Sign Districts

Council File Nos. CPC-2015-3059-CA Proposed Ordinance Revising the Citywide Sign Regulations /Related Council Files , 11-1705, 08-2020, 11-0724, 12-1611

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council supports the Planning Commission Version of the ordinance if amended to remove the Port of LA from the designation as a Tier 1 Sign District, removes downtown San Pedro as eligible for a sign district, and requires billboard companies to take down all unpermitted signs prior to installing any new ones.

The Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council commends the Planning Commission for their continued efforts to reduce sign pollution in Los Angeles and respectfully requests that the following changes to the proposed ordinance:

1. The removal of the Port of Los Angeles Plan from the designation as a Tier 1 Sign District

The Port of Los Angeles is very different from the Los Angeles International Airport and should not be treated in the same manner. The Port has work diligently with the communities of San Pedro and Wilmington to beautify the waterfront and increase its attractiveness as a tourist designation. The primary drawing card for the Port is the view of the water not found elsewhere in Los Angeles. In fact, the Port has bought out billboards in order to take them down. The Port has committed \$200 million over the next ten years to the infrastructure improvements needed to make this a world-class waterfront and is in negotiations currently for the redevelopment of Ports O Call. Allowing the development of a sign district within the Port Plan area would be detrimental to these goals.

2. The development of a process whereby Communities with small “Regional Centers”, such as San Pedro and Wilmington, could be exempted from consideration as Tier 1 Districts.

The San Pedro “Regional Center” is a small historic downtown that could easily be overwhelmed by any sign district. For the most part its buildings are one and two stories tall. The Community Redevelopment Agency and the City Planning Department worked diligently to restore the historic elements and develop planning guidelines consistent with this vision. The resulting Downtown San Pedro Community Design Overlay District (ordinance 129,935) explicitly prohibits billboards:

Standard 14c: The following signs are prohibited: billboards, free-standing pole signs, banners, illuminated architectural canopy signs, inflatable devices, blinking or scrolling signs, canister wall or canister blade signs, and signs with vinyl letters.

Furthermore, a Greening Plan is currently underdevelopment to improve the aesthetics of downtown San Pedro. Billboards would be contrary to that plan.

3. In addition the NW San Pedro Neighborhood Council supports the following changes approved by the City Planning Commission:

- a) Disapprove any AMNESTY for billboards that lack permits or have been altered in violation of their permits.
- b) Disapprove the “grandfathering” of 14 sign districts that have been added to the ordinance since it was reviewed by CPC in 2009. Grandfathering weakens the City’s off-site sign ban and creates a confusing and unmanageable patchwork for enforcement.
- c) Disapprove any new process, including a Conditional Use Permit process to authorize construction or operation of digital off-site signs outside of sign districts. There should be no digital signs outside of sign districts.
- d) Increase the takedown ratio of existing billboards in exchange for any new off-site signs in sign districts. Takedown should be no less than 5 square feet removed for every 1 square foot of TRADITIONAL billboards erected AND no less than 10 square foot removed of traditional billboards for every 1 square foot of new digital billboards. Community benefits to be offered IN ADDITION to required takedowns, not instead of sign removal.
- e) Billboard companies should only get credit for removing permitted signs.
- f) Request that the City Attorney review all signs without permits and those altered in violation of their permits for enforcement action and compliance.

In addition, billboard companies should be required to remove all of their unpermitted signs prior to erecting any new signs.

Finally, the City Council should increase funding to the Department of Building and Safety for the enforcement of the sign ordinance.

The Proposed Citywide Sign Ordinance MUST be improved and strengthened before it goes to the full City Council. Substantive changes made to the ordinance since public hearings were held in 2009 have significantly weakened the ordinance as the outdoor advertising industry continues to lobby to further weaken the City’s ability to reign in signage in Los Angeles. The changes approved by the Planning Commission would assist in strengthening it.

Once billboards are erected it is very difficult to get them removed. Once billboards are erected, communities cannot stop or attempt to regulate offensive, or unhealthful messages from being posted. Billboards are protected by First Amendment Free Speech rights. Messages for junk food, alcoholic beverages, violent images from films or television programs, etc. are all protected.

It is important that communities have a voice in determining how any Sign Districts in their area are operated/regulated.