

APPROVED
YR 3/18/19
with additional direction

MARCH 18, 2019

CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: **ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**

INITIATED BY: **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT**
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STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will receive an Initial Study/Negative Declaration, and draft Sunset Specific Plan Amendment and Zone Text Amendment, to update the City's off-site signage policy and adopt new standards for billboards on Sunset Boulevard. The purpose of this item is to establish new policy for the size, location, design, and operation of off-site advertising signage on Sunset Boulevard.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council hold a public hearing, listen to all pertinent testimony, and:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 19-_____: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ADOPTING A NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE SUNSET BOULEVARD OFF-SITE SIGNAGE POLICY, IN THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.
2. Introduce on first reading Ordinance No. 19-_____: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 19, ZONING ORDINANCE AND AN AMENDMENT TO THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS AND POLICIES FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA IN THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

The proposed Sunset Specific Plan Amendment and associated Zone Text Amendment ("policy") establish a new vision and create a decision-making framework for the future of off-site advertising signage on Sunset Boulevard. The amendment to the Sunset Specific Plan includes new standards and guidelines to regulate the distribution, size, location, and operation of new and modified billboards and tall wall signs. It includes Design Principles and an associated evaluation system that will ensure high-quality

signage projects that are creative, contextual for Sunset Boulevard, and sensitive to adjacent land uses. The amendment also guides the delivery of public benefits, including arts programming, and improvements to the public realm. The policy for off-site signage in the Sunset Specific Plan area is designed to provide a strong, but flexible framework to guide future proposed off-site signage projects – new signs and improvements to existing signs - to positively contribute to the character of the Strip.

The proposed update has been under discussion for a number of years, with Council consideration as early as 2012, and numerous outreach meetings. Attachment E details the direction from City Council, Commissions, as well as the community engagement process. Prepared with extensive analysis and input from staff, technical consultants, industry experts, and community stakeholders, the proposed policy (Attachment D) carefully balances the concerns and interests of multiple stakeholders.

Refinements to the proposed policy have come as the direct result of community and stakeholder input in several key areas:

- Establishing expanded public benefit requirements and incentives including:
 - Revenue sharing;
 - Development of a dedicated digital arts program;
 - Preservation of cultural resources;
 - Investments in the public realm such as streetscape improvements and the creation of new pedestrian amenities;
 - Inclusion of building façade improvements, major interior renovations, and seismic retrofit projects;
- Developing rigorous light emission standards and monitoring procedures.

The proposal is responsive to the direction initially established by the West Hollywood City Council by addressing sign quantity, creativity, aesthetics, new technology, and the relationship of signs to land use. The topics of flexibility, design expectations, public benefits, implementation, and operational standards have been refined and updated. The policy reflects and balances the input of adjacent neighborhoods, property owners, billboard operators, local businesses, and the broader West Hollywood community.

A. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The City Council established the initial objectives for this project, including – setting the appropriate quantity of new signs, ensuring creativity, improving aesthetics, accommodating new technology, and preventing undesirable land use balances. The proposed policy addresses these objectives in the following ways:

Setting the Appropriate Quantity of New Signs: The proposed policy allows approximately 20 new billboard faces to be installed on Sunset Boulevard over 15 years, distributed among seven defined geographic zones to complement the linear nature of the street. The signs may be permitted as part of larger projects, including

new development projects as well as existing buildings that undergo a significant upgrade to their façade, interior, or address a required seismic retrofit; conversion of existing signs to digital may be allowed on designated cultural resources. The City also has the ability to consider exemplary alternative projects that don't fit in the previous categories.

Ensuring Creativity: The policy encourages project creativity by establishing a flexible framework of Design Principles rather than prescriptive measures. The design of signage is encouraged to be responsive to the unique conditions of each site, taking into account existing or proposed architecture, open spaces, topography, street curvature, and neighboring parcels. New signage will be encouraged to be both contextual and creative by utilizing non-standard billboard materials, formats, and sizes such as curved or multi-planar surfaces, and creative architectural lighting. The policy will allow digital signs that provide creative content and coordinated arts programming.

Improving Aesthetics: The policy seeks to improve the aesthetics related to the design and operation of signage on the Sunset Strip. The proposed Design Principles and standards emphasize aesthetic improvements in a number of ways. Developers are encouraged to integrate signs and architecture in a manner that is innovative and also complements surrounding features. Lighting and operational standards control brightness, glare, and light spillover to support the safety and comfort of drivers, pedestrian, and surrounding neighbors. Major upgrades to existing buildings (such as remodels and façade improvements) are encouraged by creating opportunities for those sites to pursue new off-site advertising signage. The policy also allows and encourages aesthetic improvements to existing billboards, tall wall signs, and large video screens.

Accommodating New Technology: The policy places an emphasis on use of state of the art technology in signage projects. This will ensure that signs utilize the highest quality digital display that are adjustable to meet operational standards, are aligned with the city's sustainability goals, and can be coordinated for public arts programming. The policy encourages adaptability for future technological innovations and use of durable materials to extend signage lifespan.

Preventing Undesirable Land Use Balances: The policy supports the continued economic development of the Sunset Strip and addresses the undesirable land use patterns that can be driven by signage. New signage is targeted for projects that meet additional City policy objectives. Parcels that contain existing off-site advertising retain rights to existing sign area when redevelopment occurs. The policy discourages development designs that are driven by signage through a focus on architectural integration and minimum development thresholds for new projects that include off-site advertising signs. Existing buildings must undergo major remodels, seismic retrofits, or façade improvements in order to qualify for new signage. Existing tall wall signs and

billboards are allowed to modify their design and location to respond to changing land use configurations.

B. TOPICS ADDRESSED

The proposed policy has evolved since the initial public draft, and a history of City Council and Planning Commission actions, along with City Council staff reports, are provided in Attachments E - I. Since the last presentation to the Council in Fall 2018, staff held a series of meetings with industry stakeholders, the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission, and other interested parties to refine the topics of flexibility, review process, lighting thresholds, enforcement, public arts integration, and cultural resources. Following direction from the City Council and input from these stakeholders, the proposed amendment to the Sunset Specific Plan addresses the following topics:

Design Expectations

The Sunset Specific Plan Amendment establishes clear and elevated design expectations for new and modified off-site advertising on Sunset Boulevard. Regulations for the size, location, distribution, and operation will ensure contextual, high-quality, and neighbor-friendly design of new off-site advertising signage. The City will administratively adopt an evaluation system and implementation strategy based on criteria identified in the policy related to design excellence, innovative design, contextual and compatible design, adaptability, sustainable practice, economic development, and community benefits. These will define the broad criteria that will be used to evaluate each new off-site advertising project.

Implementation Strategy

Following adoption of the proposed amendment, the City Manager will establish the procedures for processing new off-site signage applications. The specific details of the competitive application processes will be developed in consultation with stakeholders. The anticipated implementation process is summarized as follows:

- Establishment of a project review submittal schedule, submittal requirements, and the initial number of project applications that can be approved for the new development, significant upgrade, alternative, and cultural resource project categories.
- Scoring criteria will be developed based on the Design Principles section of the policy (Attachment J). Staff will work on weighting of the broader categories as well as the individual criterion. Consideration will be developed for different categories of projects, with special attention given to projects in the pipeline and for the unique conditions inherent with Cultural Resources.

- Evaluation of submittals by an expert panel including representatives such as an architecture/urban design professional, an advertising/billboard professional, a West Hollywood resident or business owner, and a historic preservation professional (when including a cultural resource).
- The top-scoring qualified submissions may be granted a concept award for the sign proposal, valid for a 2-year window, and then have the opportunity to apply for a project development agreement.
- The anticipated implementation process including subsequent review windows and procedures is described in further detail in Section D.

Flexibility

A flexible framework has been proposed that will inspire creative, innovative, technologically-advanced, and adaptable off-site advertising projects. The following changes have been made to the policy to address City Council direction provided at the hearing on the topic on September 4, 2018:

- Many of the prescriptive and objective design requirements proposed in the original draft policy have been reformulated as Design Principles that will allow for creativity in project design to meet the elevated expectations for sign projects.
- The policy allows the City to approve alternative projects that don't fall into the other allowable categories. This allows for consideration of projects of an extraordinary design caliber that fall outside of the exact provisions of the policy but are otherwise consistent with the intent of the urban design vision, design and development requirements, guidelines, and standards. These projects require additional findings to ensure consistency with the intent of the Specific Plan, provide exceptional design, and extraordinary public benefits provided to the City.
- The new development project category has been expanded (a summary of all project categories is found in Attachment K). Projects deemed complete after June 1, 2012 now meet the definition. Also, the minimum development threshold for new development has been modified to 75% of allowable floor area for both the north and south side of Sunset Boulevard. This change was included in order to accommodate a wider array of potential projects under this application type.
- The policy allows existing tall wall signs to reapportion sign area to adjust to changing conditions on Sunset and to maintain visibility.

- The remodel projects category has been expanded to now include significant interior remodels and seismic upgrades, recognizing the cost and importance of reinvestment in existing buildings.

Public Benefits

The policy includes a focus on the delivery of public benefits from off-site advertising signage. Benefits are envisioned to be both local, including signage programming and physical improvements to Sunset Boulevard, and citywide, benefiting the City of West Hollywood at large. A key component of the policy will be the outdoor display of curated digital art that will be coordinated across all new digital signs. Additional benefits could include permanent public art, physical improvements to public spaces, preservation of historic buildings through cultural resource designation, and revenue sharing to support city services. Additionally, there is flexibility to address future identified needs. The following changes are included in the attached draft policy:

- Expanded the potential number of digital sign conversions in conjunction with preservation of cultural resources by moving to a pool of sign area as opposed to a strict number of projects.
- Reduced the art programming contribution rate from 25% to 17.5% of operational hours.
- Clarified scheduling and operation of arts programming on Sunset. Billboard owners and operators will be invited to participate in and provide input regularly as part of the curation and yearly programming of arts on digital billboards subject to final approval of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission.
- Allowed for buildings that are proposing required seismic retrofits or major remodels to be considered for new off-site signage to help recover the cost of important upgrades and needed repairs.

Operational Standards

A team of experts has guided staff and helped create signage operational standards that will control the hours of operation, brightness, and energy use to ensure that new or modified signs create an environment safe and comfortable for drivers, pedestrians, and neighboring land uses. Specifically, the refresh rate (how often digital sign images may change) was updated from 16 seconds to 8 seconds to align with standard roadway safety and advertising industry rates.

C. SUMMARY

The proposed policy will establish a vision that will allow for additional signage including digital and guide new innovative signage projects with accompanying public benefits to

create an environment on Sunset Boulevard that is truly unique. High-quality signs will be creative, responsive to the special nature of the street, and sensitive to the surroundings. The policy is intended to deliver multiple benefits by creating new economic opportunities for property owners, generating improvements to the public realm, creating incentives for the preservation of cultural resources, and establishing a curated digital arts program.

D. NEXT STEPS

The evaluation process for determining which off-site signage applications will be selected will be determined by the City Manager after the policy is adopted. The Design Principles included in Section 2 of the proposed ordinance are the broad criteria and priorities that will be used for evaluation in the process to screen for design excellence. Following approval of this new policy, the City Manager will work with staff, industry stakeholders, technical experts, and other interested parties to begin the implementation process for new signage project opportunities. Pending Council approval of the policy, the anticipated next steps and timeline are as follows:

April – June 2019: Staff meets with operators, stakeholders and interested parties to seek input on draft scoring system for evaluation.

July 2019: City staff finalizes scoring system and releases call for projects for new/digital signs. Initial call for projects will award opportunities for up to 12 sites:

- Approximately 4 conversions to digital on historic sites
- 8 new signs: upgrades, new development, or alternative projects

October 2019: Submittals due. The composition of the review panel is expected to include at a minimum:

- 1 Architecture/Urban Design Professional
- 1 Advertising/Billboard Professional
- 1 West Hollywood Generalist (resident or business owner)
- 1 Cultural Resources Professional (only for relevant projects)

November – December 2019: T highest-scoring qualified projects notified and initial projects may begin development agreement process.

2020: Staff begins processing entitlements for initial round of sign projects.

2021: Application process for the review of new signage opportunities resumes.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-1: Adaptability to Future Change.
- OSP-8: Enhance the Cultural and Creative Life of the Community.
- OSP-9: Upgrade Existing Buildings & Infrastructure.
- PSG-1: Maintain the City's Unique Urban Balance with Emphasis on Residential Neighborhood Livability.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- LU-15: Maintain Sunset Boulevard as a regional, national, and international destination for entertainment, and the primary economic engine of the City.
- LU-16: Maximize the iconic urban design value and visual creativity of signage in West Hollywood.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

Staff will carefully track and administer the screening process, the quantity of sign projects, development agreement negotiations, design quality, operational standards, and post-construction monitoring.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

A CEQA Initial Study was prepared, which determined that the proposed policy would not have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration was prepared and provided to the public, agencies, and the Los Angeles County Clerk. During the public comment period (April 6 to April 27, 2017), the City received 22 comment letters. Responses to these letters are provided in Section 5 of the Initial Study/Negative Declaration.

On September 4, 2018 the City Council provided additional direction which resulted in clarifications and updates to the amended policy. The revisions that have been made to the proposed policy would not result in changes to the impact conclusions in the Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) such that recirculation is warranted. The environmental impact conclusions continue to apply to the revised version of the policy. These updates and additional CEQA analysis are outlined in Attachment B. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5, the City is not required to recirculate the IS/ND for public review.

In addition to conducting an environmental analysis that found no significant impacts under CEQA, the policy encourages sustainability by requiring that new digital signs be carbon-neutral, meaning that any additional energy required by a billboard must be from solar power generated on-site, be purchased from carbon-free sources, or demonstrate offsets to energy use through other means.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Community engagement was extensive for this project. During the development of the proposed policy, staff has incorporated input from the Historic Preservation Commission, the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission, the Planning Commission, as well as stakeholder and community groups. The final policy reflects comments from residents, property owners, billboard companies and other interested parties. Staff has met with the Chamber of Commerce Billboard Subcommittee on numerous occasions since the September 18, 2017 Council meeting, as well as meeting individually with a number of stakeholders who had questions or policy suggestions. A detailed summary of community engagement is included as part of Attachment E and additional details are also provided in each of the attached staff reports (Attachments G – I).

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT / LONG RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time. However, the provision of off-site signage will result in future revenue for the City, to be determined on a project level basis. It is anticipated that review of signage projects will be expedited by a contract staff position, which is expected to fully cost recoverable.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Proposed Resolution No. 19-_____ (CEQA Adoption)
- B. Initial Study/Negative Declaration
- C. Proposed Ordinance No. 19-_____ (Zone Text Amendment and Sunset Specific Plan Amendment)
- D. Proposed Sunset Signage Policy
- E. Summary of Prior City Council Actions
- F. Excerpt of September 4, 2018 City Council Meeting Minutes
- G. September 4, 2018 City Council Staff Report
- H. September 18, 2017 City Council Staff Report
- I. June 15, 2017 Planning Commission Staff Report
- J. Draft Design Principles/Screening for Design Excellence Criteria
- K. Summary of Proposed Categories for New and Improved Signs
- L. Inventory of Outdoor Advertising Signs on Sunset Blvd.
- M. Written Communication from the Public

RESOLUTION NO. 19-_____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ADOPTING A NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE SUNSET BOULEVARD OFF-SITE SIGNAGE POLICY, IN THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City of West Hollywood initiated amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Sections 19.34.080, 19.34.090, and 19.90.020 of the Municipal Code and Part 2, Section 1, Subsection 8 (Billboards and Art Advertising) of the Sunset Specific Plan to replace that section in its entirety, in order to establish new policies, guidelines, and standards related to off-site advertising signs in the Sunset Specific Plan Area.

SECTION 2. The proposed project will establish a new vision and creates a policy framework for the future of off-site advertising signage on Sunset Boulevard. The amendment to the Sunset Specific Plan includes new standards and guidelines to regulate the distribution, size, location, and operation of new and modified billboards and tall walls. Design Principles and an associated evaluation system will ensure high-quality signage projects that are creative, contextual for Sunset Boulevard, and sensitive to adjacent land uses. The amendment also guides the delivery of public benefits, including arts programming, and improvements to the public realm.

SECTION 3. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, staff prepared an Initial Study and a Negative Declaration regarding this project. The evidence in the initial study demonstrates that all impact categories are less than significant. The policies were crafted with input from experts to regulate light levels, urban design, digital operations, location, height, cultural resources, identified public viewsheds, and number of new and modified signs.

SECTION 4. A public review period for the Negative Declaration started on April 6, 2017 and ended on April 27, 2017. The comments received are addressed in the response to Comment section of the Final Initial Study Negative Declaration for the Sunset Strip Off-Site Signage Policy.

SECTION 5. The Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on June 15, 2017. The Planning Commission recommended approval to the City Council for the Zone Text Amendment, approval of the Specific Plan Amendment, and adoption of the Initial Study/Negative Declaration.

SECTION 6. The City Council held duly noticed public hearings on the matter on September 18, 2017 and September 4, 2018. A public hearing was duly noticed for the City Council regular meeting of March 18, 2019 by publication in the Beverly Press newspaper, the West Hollywood Independent Newspaper, and the City website and by announcement on City Channel 6 by March 7, 2019. Notices to property owners and residents within a 500' radius of the Sunset Specific Plan area were mailed and postmarked on March 7, 2019.

SECTION 5. Since 2017, City staff have made revisions to the policy language based on feedback from decision makers and stakeholders. On September 4, 2018 the City Council provided additional direction which resulted in clarifications and updates to the draft Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy. The revisions fall into the following categories: improvements to readability and clarity; minor editorial corrections; and minor policy adjustments.

Revisions from the first two categories (readability, clarity, and editorial corrections) do not change the conclusions presented in the IS/ND, since such revisions would have no change on the proposed project's potential environmental effects. Examples of such changes include re-ordering of text in the introductory sections, combining the "Background," "How to Use this Document," and "Vision" subsections into a single section, inserting a bulleted list in the introduction describing the key components of the policy, incorporating a table summarizing the administrative procedures for different off-site signage types, clarifying the luminance and illuminance monitoring and reporting requirements for digital billboards, reformatting the document, and including an updated off-site signage survey. These organizational and editorial changes have improved the readability and clarity of the policy but would not have the potential to alter the environmental effects of policy implementation and are not addressed further in this memorandum.

Revisions from the third category (minor policy adjustments) required review to determine if these revisions result in any potential for policy implementation to affect the environment that is inconsistent with the analysis in the IS/ND. However, as explained in the memo from Dudek dated February 7, 2019 (attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference), these minor policy changes do not change the conclusions presented in the IS/ND and would not lead to new significant environmental effects, project revisions, or mitigation measures requiring recirculation of the CEQA document. The revisions would not change the impact conclusions in the Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) such that recirculation would be warranted. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5, the City is not required to recirculate the IS/ND for public review.

SECTION 7. The negative declaration prepared for this project reflects the City's independent judgment and analysis. The City Council finds, based on the whole of the record, that there is no substantial evidence that the program would have a significant impact on the environment and hereby adopts the Initial Study/

Negative Declaration for the Sunset Strip Off-Site Signage Policy, as provided as an attachment herein.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 18th day of March, 2019.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

City Clerk

ATTACHMENT B – Initial Study/Negative Declaration can be found by

clicking the following link:

<https://app.box.com/v/sunsetbillboardpolicy>

ORDINANCE NO. 19-_____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO MUNICIPAL CODE TITLE 19, ZONING ORDINANCE AND A SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS AND POLICIES FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA IN THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City of West Hollywood initiated amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Sections 19.34.080, 19.34.090, and 19.90.020 of the Municipal Code and Part 2, Section 1, Subsection 8 (Billboards and Art Advertising) of the Sunset Specific Plan to replace that section in its entirety, in order to establish new policies, guidelines, and standards related to off-site advertising signs in the Sunset Specific Plan Area.

SECTION 2. The proposed changes will establish a new vision and creates a policy framework for the future of off-site advertising signage on Sunset Boulevard. The amendment to the Sunset Specific Plan includes new standards and guidelines to regulate the distribution, size, location, and operation of new and modified billboards and tall walls. Design Principles and an associated evaluation system will ensure high-quality signage projects that are creative, contextual for Sunset Boulevard, and sensitive to adjacent land uses. The amendment also guides the delivery of public benefits, including arts programming, and improvements to the public realm.

SECTION 3. The Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on June 15, 2017. The Planning Commission recommended approval to the City Council for the Zone Text Amendment, approval of the Specific Plan Amendment, and adoption of the Initial Study/Negative Declaration.

SECTION 4. The City Council held duly noticed public hearings on the matter on September 18, 2017 and September 4, 2018. A public hearing was duly noticed for the City Council regular meeting of March 18, 2019 by publication in the Beverly Press newspaper, the West Hollywood Independent Newspaper, and the City website and by announcement on City Channel 6 by March 7, 2019. Notices to property owners and residents within a 500' radius of the Sunset Specific Plan area were mailed and postmarked on March 7, 2019.

SECTION 5. The proposed project is consistent with the Goals and Policies of the General Plan, specifically Policy LU-15, which states that the City should “maintain Sunset Boulevard as a regional, national, and international destination for entertainment, and the primary economic engine of the City” and Policy LU-16, which states the City should “maximize the iconic urban design value and visual creativity of signage in West Hollywood.” The policy reflects a vision for state of the art off-site signage practices that benefit the Sunset Strip with improved pedestrian orientation, support for the arts, and enhanced urban design so that the Strip remains iconic and continues to welcome visitors. Additionally, public art programming brings new visitors to the Strip, technology upgrades enhances the synergy of entertainment, advertising, historic resources and the arts, buildings with integrated billboards create a vibrant experience, and; billboards contribute positively to the excitement of the Strip without negative impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods. Further, the off-site signage policy will conform to the Sunset Specific Plan in meeting the goals for sustaining high quality urban design, economic development, and preservation of cultural resources and does not impede the City’s ability to meet is General Plan and SSP goals.

SECTION 6. Section 19.34.080 of Chapter 19.34 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

19.34.080 Off-Site Signs Not on Sunset Boulevard.

- A. Purpose. This section provides standards for off-site signs, including district identification signs and large screen video signs, not on Sunset Boulevard. All off-site signs on Sunset Boulevard are governed by the Sunset Specific Plan.
- B. Applicability. District Identification Signs are governed by Section (E) below and large screen video signs are allowed in the CR zone in compliance with subsection (F) below. (Also see Section 19.34.090 - Prohibited and Restricted Signs.)
- C. Permit Requirement. A sign permit issued in compliance with Section 19.34.100 (Sign Permits) shall be required for any off-site signs allowed under the provisions of this section, except where a different permit requirement is established by this section.
- D. Approval Authority. The Commission shall have the authority to approve district identification signs and large-screen video signs. The Planning and Development Services Director may approve all other off-site signs and to the extent permitted under this Code.
- E. District Identification Signs. A district identification sign is an off-site sign for the identification of a specific district or center identified in the General Plan or a business improvement or redevelopment area approved by the Council.
 - 1. Procedure. Hearing notice shall be sent to all businesses within a district or redevelopment area, or to owners of property within 500 feet of the site, whichever is less.

2. Standards. District identification signs shall not:
 - a. Interfere with pedestrian or vehicular safety to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Works;
 - b. Detract from the pedestrian quality of the surrounding area; or
 - c. Add to an over-proliferation of signs on one property or in an area.
 3. Maintenance Agreement Required. The owner of the sign shall enter into an agreement with the city for funding the ongoing cleaning, maintenance, and repair of the sign subject to the approval of the Director of Public Works.
- F. Large Screen Video Signs.
1. Criteria for Eligibility. Large screen video signs shall be allowed only in conjunction with new construction of 5,000 square feet or more. Large screen video signs may be approved when the signs are located in the CR zone and meet all of the following criteria:
 - a. The site where the sign is located is designated gateway node under the General Plan.
 - b. The site where the sign is located is designated a light way or glow way under the Santa Monica Boulevard Master Plan.
 - c. The large screen video sign is a component of a special lighting concept contributing the project's gateway status as a glow way or light way as required by the Santa Monica Boulevard Master Plan.
 2. Procedure. Public notice shall be provided as required by Chapter 19.48 for a Development Permit.
 3. Standards. Proposed video signs shall comply with the following standards:
 - a. The sign shall be at least 100 square feet in screen area.
 - b. If the sign is located in the CR zone, the sign shall be at least 200 feet away from any residentially zoned property and 1,000 feet away from any other large screen video in West Hollywood.
 - c. If the sign is located in the CR zone, the sign shall be no larger than 500 square feet in size.
 4. Off-site advertising shall be limited to the large-screen video portion of the sign.
 5. Time Limits and Extensions. Large screen video signs shall be installed within two years from the date of approval. The Planning and
 6. Planning and Development Services Director may, upon request before the expiration date, extend the permit one time for an additional six months in compliance with Chapter 19.62 (Permit Implementation, Time Limits, and Extensions).

SECTION 7. Subsection 19.34.090(A)(4) of Section 19.34.090 of Chapter 19.34 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

4. Off-site signs not specifically allowed by the provisions of Section 19.34.080 (Off-Site Signs Not on Sunset Boulevard) or the Sunset Specific Plan;

SECTION 8. Section 59 of the definition of "Sign" within Subsection 19.90.020 of Chapter 19.90 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

59. *Tall Wall Sign.* An off-site sign with minimum area of 5,000 square feet, attached to an existing building wall visible from Sunset Boulevard.

SECTION 9. Sunset Specific Plan Part 2, Chapter 8 is hereby deleted in its entirety and replaced with the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy, attached hereto as Attachment A.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 18th day of March, 2019.

DRAFT SUNSET BOULEVARD BILLBOARD POLICY

This document replaces Part Two: Section 1, Subsection 8 of the 1996 Strike-Through Draft Sunset Boulevard Specific Plan, Billboards and Art Advertising.

All other signage not addressed in this section is regulated by the West Hollywood Municipal Code.

1. BACKGROUND & VISION

The Sunset Strip is globally recognized for its vibrant combination of signs, entertainment, and nightlife. The Strip has the densest concentration of off-site signage (billboards and tall wall signs) on the West Coast. A unique destination, vibrant during both day and night, the Strip is a major economic engine for West Hollywood, with a long tradition of innovative and memorable signage. This policy update realizes the City's long-standing vision to enhance the unique traditions of Sunset Boulevard to integrate off-site signs, entertainment, and public art into the existing iconic and historic setting, resulting in a one-of-a kind built environment that celebrates the City's creative identity. The creative legacy of billboards on the Sunset Strip provides cultural value to both the City and the greater region.

Off-site advertising signs are integral to the character of the Sunset Strip and interface with the larger West Hollywood community. Determining the appropriate number, placement and quality of the signs is an important factor to ensure that these signs are good neighbors. This chapter sets forth goals, policies, and procedures for off-site signage on Sunset that encourages creativity, allows for updated technology, and describes appropriate operations requirements.

The off-site advertising industry on the Sunset Strip is a key driver of the West Hollywood economy. The City's vision addresses the needs and goals of the Strip, as well as those of the billboard operators and property owners.

This chapter builds on the original principles of the Sunset Specific Plan, providing a vision and framework for design excellence, new opportunities for signage, public art, economic development and preservation of cultural resources.

The following statements express the City's multi-faceted vision for the role of off-site advertising signage on the Sunset Strip:

- The 21st century Sunset Strip will continue to be iconic, attractive, and welcoming to visitors.
- Off-site advertising signage enhances the historic synergy of entertainment, advertising, arts, and music with cutting-edge technology.
- Excellent design thoughtfully integrates billboards and architecture to provide an urban experience like no other.
- Modifications to existing signage and new signage benefit from improved quality and high design standards that protect and enhance value.
- Public art programming integrates with signage to bring new visitors to the Strip.
- Billboards are good neighbors, contributing positively to the excitement of the Strip without negative impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods.

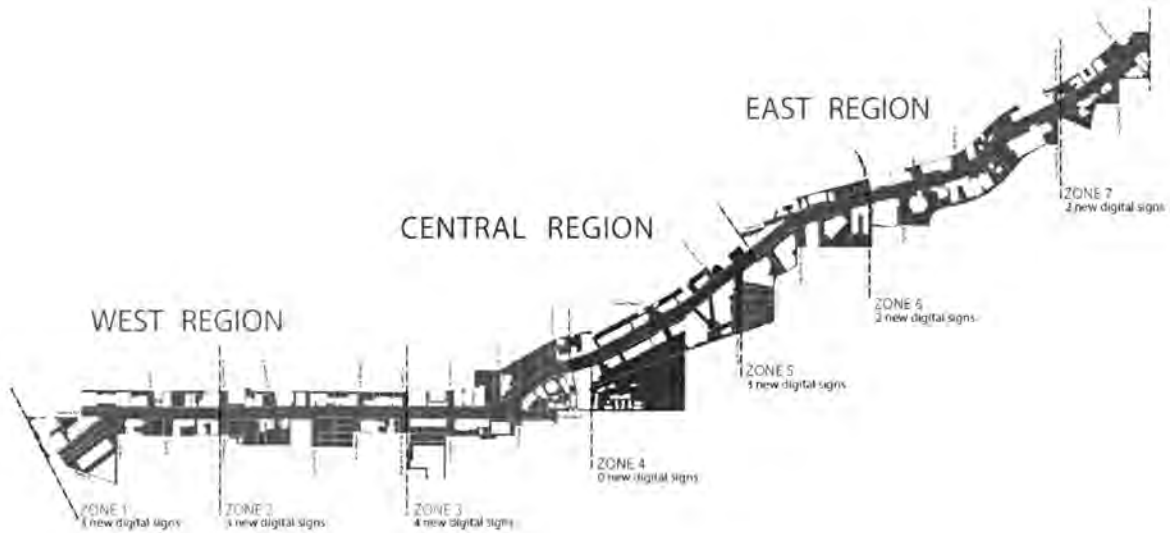
This policy implements the vision components that:

- Identify preferred sign types and locations,

- Recommend distribution and number of off-site advertising signs,
- Allow enhancements to existing signs,
- Permit digital technology with appropriate operations features, and
- Support a unique cultural setting that synthesizes off-site signage and public art.

Recommended Digital Billboard Distribution

Digital off-site advertising signs are intended to be distributed along the Sunset Strip to complement the linear experience of the street. The suggested distribution is allotted to the individual regions and zones as shown in the Digital Billboard Distribution map below in order to support the specific character of each Zone. While the guidance of distribution is suggested at these zones, it does not suggest that signs be distributed evenly within each.



2. **DESIGN PRINCIPLES:** The design principles build on the existing creative energy of the Sunset Strip to provide for new and modified off-site signage that synthesizes advertising, urban design, architecture, public art, entertainment, and 21st century technology. Off-site advertising projects that meet or exceed the following principles are encouraged, and each will be reviewed for design features that demonstrate the intent of the following principles.

DESIGN QUALITY

- a. Design Excellence
 - i. Off-site advertising signage that focuses on innovative media formatting thoughtfully integrated with excellent building design.
 - ii. Signage projects that create a timeless design that contributes to the iconic nature of Sunset Boulevard.
 - iii. Off-site advertising signage that is part of a cohesive design approach, bringing together signage with building architecture and high-quality pedestrian spaces or enhancements with the following design elements:
 - 1. Complementary and integrated design, style, and materials of signage and architecture.
 - 2. Signage that complements existing signage where applicable, showing a seamless approach to all signage on site.
 - 3. Off-site advertising signage must not hide or obscure the underlying uses, entrances, or open spaces of the building.
 - 4. Usage of high-quality and durable materials.
- b. Innovative Design
 - i. Integrates with other building features such as architectural lighting elements, green walls, or other innovative design features
 - ii. Utilizes innovative billboard formats including vertical orientation, curved or multi-planar surfaces, and/or non-standard proportions.
 - iii. Creatively uses the latest in technology to ensure digital image quality
 - iv. Uses innovative architectural features and materials.
- c. Context & Compatibility Design
 - i. Enhances adjacent public spaces and the overall experience of pedestrians.
 - ii. Is compatible with surrounding buildings and natural features.
 - iii. Responds to topography and curves of the street.
 - iv. Provides innovative opportunities for integrated public art.
 - v. Builds on and respects the historical and cultural identity and energy of the Strip.
 - vi. Acts as a good neighbor to surrounding area by limiting light spill-over and visual intrusion.
 - vii. Avoids and reduces the appearance of visual clutter.
 - viii. Does not contribute to an over-concentration of digital signs compared to the distribution allocation in the Digital Billboard Distribution map.

ADAPTABLE & SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

- d. Adaptability
 - i. Creates signs with lasting economic value through use of quality materials.
 - ii. Envisions future technology and provides opportunity for upgrades.

iii. Designed to evolve with future cultural and lifestyle trends.

e. Sustainable Practice

- i. Uses 100% clean energy and/or generates energy on-site.
- ii. Incorporates innovative sustainability features.
- iii. Addresses and furthers the City's intent for a sustainable development.
- iv. Uses durable, natural, and other sustainable materials.

LASTING VALUE

f. Economic Development

- i. Increases value and visibility of off-site signage that attracts new viewers and resonates with the City's creative identity.
- ii. Represents the potential for an iconic sign, based on the combination of design and location that is responsive to the creative identity of West Hollywood and the Sunset Strip.
- iii. Is part of a project that maximizes land use development potential, especially at the high-value locations on Sunset Boulevard.
- iv. Results in signage that is secondary to the land uses on the lot, unless certain limitations preclude other uses.

g. Community Benefits

- i. Provides public benefits, uses, or other features that address identified City priorities and community needs as part of development agreements and that meet the vision and intent of the policy.
- ii. Incentivizes the preservation of significant Cultural Resources through off-site signage revenue.
- iii. Complements and protects the character-defining features of cultural resources.
- iv. Furthers the City's vision for enhancing public art on the Sunset Strip.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

	Type	Qualifying Criteria & Section	Permit Type (Zoning Code Section)/ Application Process	
Billboards	New Signs/Sign Area, (including additional area from Reallocation)	New Development at 75% Development Capacity 4.c.i	Development Agreement (5a.i) + Screening for Design Excellence (5a.ii)	
		Significant Upgrade Project at 75% Development Capacity 4.c.ii		
	Reallocation of Existing Sign Area On-site (equal or lesser area)	4.c.iii.3	Administrative Permit	
	Modification or Replacement of Existing	Addition of Second Face		4.c.v.5
		Relocation or Reorientation		4.c.v.4
		Height Increase		Proof of Obstruction 4.c.v.2
	Traditional to Digital Conversion	Existing Billboard on Cultural Resource 4.c.iv	Certificate of Appropriateness + Development Agreement + Screening for Design Excellence	
Tall Wall Signs	Modification	4.d.3	Development Agreement	
	Image Change	4.d.3.iii	Zone Clearance w/6-month term grant	
Temporary Creative Projects	Billboards	7.a	Administrative Permit	
	Tall Wall Signs	7.a		
	Temporary Advertising Installations	8		
Alternative Projects		3.b	Development Agreement + Screening for Design Excellence	

a. Project Requirements

- i. **Development Agreements.** New billboard projects, modification of tall wall signs, and alternative projects are subject to the review and approval procedures and requirements of Chapter 19.66 of the Zoning Code. In addition:
 - 1. Each approved project is required to provide public art programming as outlined in Section 5.e.
 - 2. In addition to the Required Findings of Zoning Code Section 19.66.030, the approval of the Development Agreement shall also require a finding that the project includes public benefits, which include: Physical site improvements or monetary contribution intended for streetscape amenities or publicly accessible open space that enhances the quality and comfort of the pedestrian experience.
- ii. **Screening For Design Excellence.**
 - 1. Applications for new off-site signs shall be screened for design excellence in accordance with a process and procedures established by the City Manager, or designee.
 - 2. Design excellence shall be evaluated based on the specific design principles in Section 2.
 - 3. Qualifying submissions are granted a concept award, valid for a period of 2 years, and making the applicant eligible to apply for a development agreement.
 - 4. The City may choose to limit the number of concept awards/applications for digital billboards under review at one time.

b. Alternative Projects.

- i. All Off-Site Sign projects are subject to the applicable design and development requirements, guidelines and standards listed in this Chapter. However, the City retains discretion to approve an alternative proposal if the project is shown to further the vision, goals and polices stated by the Sunset Specific Plan and is consistent with the intent of the urban design vision, design and development requirements, guidelines, and standards that would otherwise apply to the project as demonstrated by making the required findings below.
- ii. In addition to the Required Findings of Zoning Code Section 19.66.030, the approval of the Development Agreement for an alternative project shall also require findings that the project:
 - 1. Meets the overall intent of the Design Principles of Section 2 above;
 - 2. Represents an exceptional design that furthers the vision of both the Specific Plan and of Part 2, Section 1, Subsection 8; and
 - 3. Creates or includes an extraordinary benefit to the City.

c. Alternative Sign Area Measurement

- i. In lieu of the provisions of WHMC Section 19.34.040, the surface area of an irregularly shaped sign may be calculated by measuring those portions used for off-site advertising content on a 1' x 1' grid. Area may be non-contiguous; however, portions located within 5 feet in any dimension shall constitute a contiguous measurement.

d. Viewshed Analysis

- i. Modification to existing signs that change height or relocation on site as described in Section 6.c.v shall complete an analysis of views as described below.
- ii. The Viewshed Analysis shall illustrate the relationship between the proposed modifications to the billboard and:
 1. Designated local, state, and national Cultural Resources.
 2. Public viewsheds identified for view protection and enhancement in the Sunset Specific Plan.
 3. Existing outdoor advertising facilities on adjacent parcels.
- iii. The following shall be included in the submission:
 1. Photo simulation of proposed off-site signage as seen from vantage points located on Sunset Boulevard approximately 1250 feet to the east and west of the project.
 2. Context plan view of proposed modified billboard depicting a 1250 feet radius area, which identifies the primary sight lines and their relationship to adjacent parcels (including residential uses to the north and south of the Strip).
 3. 3D massing studies depicting proposed modified billboard. The studies should include massing of proposed development, if any, on applicant's parcel as well as existing buildings and advertising signs within a 1250 feet radius.

e. Public and Arts Programming

- i. Digital billboards shall contribute a minimum of 17.5% of programing time for art or civic announcements.
- ii. New and modified off-site signs (non-digital) shall contribute a minimum of 96 hours per year for art/public programing or provide a financial equivalent.
- iii. The West Hollywood Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission Art On The Outside (AOTO) Subcommittee shall be responsible for the approval of all public arts programming, in accordance with the ACAC's established guidelines for public arts programming.
- iv. The City shall establish the scheduling and operations of arts programing for digital billboards on an annual basis and may alter programming schedules depending on factors such as the number of participating signs, cultural events, technological updates, City priorities, or sign operator input.
- v. Programming time for digital billboards shall include artwork displayed at the top of each hour and once a month during a five-hour event, with precise scheduling to be determined by the City's AOTO Subcommittee on an annual basis.
- vi. Each new sign shall include a revenue sharing public benefit monetary contribution that will include funding for City's art programming, such as curator and artist fees, on the Strip.

- f. Ground Disturbance.** Modifications to existing signage that requires ground-disturbing activities must adhere to the following standards:

- i. Projects proposing new ground disturbance (e.g., excavation of new post holes) should be reviewed by an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards prior to any ground-disturbance taking place. The archaeologist shall provide an assessment of archaeological sensitivity and the potential to impact subsurface deposits, and may provide recommendations for archaeological and/or Native American monitoring, additional study, or testing, if warranted.
- ii. In the event that archaeological resources (sites, features, or artifacts) are exposed during construction activities, all construction work occurring within 100 feet of the find shall immediately stop until a qualified archaeologist, meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, can evaluate the significance of the find and determine whether or not additional study is warranted. Depending upon the significance of the find under CEQA (14 CCR 15064.5(f); PRC Section 21082), the archaeologist may simply record the find and allow work to continue. If the discovery proves significant under CEQA, additional work, such as preparation of an archaeological treatment plan, additional testing, or data recovery may be warranted. Construction in the vicinity of the find(s) shall not resume until deemed appropriate by the archeologist.
- iii. If paleontological resources are encountered during excavation, all work within 100 feet of the find must stop and the City of West Hollywood Planning & Development Services Department shall be immediately notified. A qualified paleontologist shall be retained to evaluate the finds and recommend appropriate handling and recovery methods. Construction in the vicinity of the find(s) shall not resume until deemed appropriate by the qualified paleontologist.

g. Vegetation.

- i. Existing vegetation on public property shall not be removed or trimmed in order to improve views for any sign.
- ii. Construction activities that involve vegetation trimming or removal and occur between February 1 and August 31 require that a qualified biologist must survey the immediate area for the presence of an active bird nest. If an active bird nest is located within the disturbance area, avoidance measures shall be developed by the biologist to ensure compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

h. Nonconforming Signs

- i. Nonconforming off-site advertising signs within the area of the Specific Plan shall be subject to the provisions of Zoning Code Section 19.72.040.
- ii. Existing large video screens shall not change sign area or location but may upgrade technology in compliance with this chapter's Lighting and Operational Standards through an Administrative Permit process.

4. Sign Types and Standards

a. General Standards

i. Location

1. All off-site signs shall be located no less than 10' above the adjacent sidewalk level unless designed to be part of a pedestrian enhancement.
2. The height of each sign shall not exceed the maximum allowable height for each site.
3. Signs shall not obscure public sightlines to building entrances or publically accessible open space and view terraces.
4. Space between billboard face and building should be minimized and shall not exceed six feet.

b. Design and Operation

- i. Backlighting is encouraged for new and existing traditional billboards through a sign permit process.
- ii. Windows that are partially obscured by signs and architectural lighting shall allow for the transmission of 50% of visible daylight.
- iii. Designs may integrate digital advertising displays with the creative use of architectural lighting.

c. Billboards

i. **New Development Projects.** A new billboard may be approved as part of a new development project.

1. Development projects that include a billboard application must be developed to at least 75% of the allowed permitted floor area (base density) on the subject property allowed under the Sunset Specific Plan.
2. Development project applications deemed complete between June 1, 2012 and [insert effective date of this SSP Amendment] may be eligible for consideration to include an off-site signage component.

ii. **Significant Upgrade Projects.** A new billboard may be approved as part of a significant upgrade or façade remodel project on an existing building.

1. A significant upgrade or façade remodel shall constitute either:
 - a. A substantial change in the exterior fenestration and overall appearance of at least 50% of the area of the façade(s) facing Sunset Boulevard.
 - b. An interior remodel improvement project with a valuation of at least 25% of the assessed value of the building according to the County Assessor's records if the property had been sold within the past 24 months or a current appraisal from an MAI Designated Appraiser.
 - c. Completion of Phase 1 Seismic Upgrade as described in Section 13.28.040 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code prior to obtaining sign permits.
2. The building shall utilize at least 75% of the permitted floor area (base density) on the property.
3. Additional building façade height unsupported by occupied floor area, such as, but not limited to, wall extensions, framing elements, and other

similar features shall not be added for the purposes of creating area for an off-site sign.

iii. **Sign Area**

1. **New Billboards.**

- a. The total combined sign area of new billboards on any site shall not exceed 1,500 square feet.
- b. The total sign area of digital billboards on a site shall not exceed 1,000 square feet.

2. **Existing Billboards.**

- a. **Cultural Resources.**
 - i. The cumulative digital sign area among all eligible cultural resource sites shall be limited to 4,000 square feet.
 - ii. Digital billboards on a site with a designated cultural resource shall be limited to 1 sign face per site.
 - iii. The sign area of digital billboards allowed on any cultural resource site shall be the lesser of:
 1. The existing sign area of an existing billboard as recorded in the 2019 Inventory of Outdoor Advertising Signs on Sunset Blvd. (2019 Inventory); or
 2. 1,000 square feet.

3. **Reallocation of Sign Area for Existing Billboards.**

- a. The sign area of any existing billboard(s) may be reallocated or combined to new off-site signs subject to the requirements of Section C.4.v below.

iv. **Modification to Existing Billboards on Designated Cultural Resources**

Sites. Designated cultural resources with existing off-site advertising signs may modify or improve their off-site advertising assets to encourage preservation of historic structures, including opportunities to convert existing billboards to digital technology subject to the following:

1. All projects involving a designated cultural resource shall submit a Certificate of Appropriateness application to be reviewed by the City of West Hollywood Historic Preservation Commission in accordance with WHMC Chapter 19.58.
2. All new or modified signs located on or directly adjacent to a property containing cultural resources shall conform with Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to ensure projects do not adversely impact the integrity of the resource or its setting, obscure character-defining features of any adjacent historical resources, and are compatible with the scale, size, and proportion of the historic resource.

v. **Modification of Existing Signs.** Existing non-digital signs, as identified in the 2019 Inventory, may be modified subject to the Administrative Permit requirements and procedures.

1. **28-Day Notification.** Notwithstanding the notice requirements of Section 19.44.050 of the WHMC, an Administrative Permit for a modification of

an existing off-site sign shall be posted on-site for 28 days and shall meet the posting size and location requirements of W.H.M.C. Section 19.74.020.c.

2. **Height.** Existing billboards with sightlines that are obstructed by City street trees or existing buildings may apply for a one-time exception for additional height of up to 14 feet above the allowable height limit of the parcel if can be demonstrated that such a modification is necessary to improve visibility.
3. **Area.** An existing billboard may add sign area up to a maximum area of 1,200 square feet per face.
4. **Relocation on Site.** An existing billboard may change its location or orientation with the submittal of a Viewshed Analysis. Additionally, the relocation shall be no closer than three feet from an adjoining property line.
5. **Addition of Second Face.** A second billboard face to be added to an existing traditional billboard to cover the supporting back structure is permitted in accordance with the provisions of this section:
 - a. The new billboard face shall be no larger than the existing billboard face and no part of the new billboard face shall exceed the dimensions of the existing face, and to the extent feasible should match the dimensions of the existing sign. The new billboard face shall serve to effectively screen the back supporting structure of the existing billboard.
 - b. The height of the second face shall not be greater than the height of the existing face.
 - c. The new billboard face shall be visible from Sunset Boulevard.
 - d. One-sided billboard faces that are part of an existing "v-shaped" billboard shall not be converted into a two-sided billboard.
 - e. The addition of a second face shall not create a "v-shaped" billboard.
 - f. If the existing billboard height exceeds the height limitation of the zoning district of the parcel, the height of the existing billboard and the new second face shall be reduced to comply with the height limitation. Notwithstanding, a second side may be allowed above the height limit on a billboard mounted directly on a rooftop if the existing billboard is kept in the exact location with no change of angle and provided that both the existing face and the proposed second face otherwise meet all requirements of this section.
 - g. Maximum distance between billboard faces shall be six feet, and the new billboard face shall be mounted on the same support structure as the existing billboard.

d. **Tall Wall Sign**

- i. **Sign Area.** The sign area for a single tall wall sign shall be no less than 5,000 square feet.
- ii. **Design Standards**
 1. Each sign shall be attached to the face of a building.

2. The image area may include the use of windows, provided that windows comprise no more than 15 percent of the image area and provided further that any material used to cover windows allows visibility through the windows from the building's interior.
 3. The sign shall be designed and oriented to provide an unobstructed view of the minimum image area of the sign from at least one pedestrian vantage point at ground level on Sunset Boulevard.
 4. The area of the sign containing text shall not exceed 15 percent of the total sign area as measured in compliance with West Hollywood Municipal Code *Section 19.34.040(C)*
 5. The wall occupied by the sign may have separate planes, provided that the sign is perceived as a continuous image from at least one point on Sunset Boulevard
 6. The primary wall (whichever wall contains the most sign area) shall contain no other signs, except for street address, building identification sign, or the logo of the primary tenant.
 7. The use of the proposed wall for a tall wall sign shall not substantially impair the aesthetic appeal of the building's architecture.
- iii. **Modification of Tall Wall Signs.**
1. Existing tall wall signs may be modified to reallocate existing sign area to change the proportions, orientation, and location of the sign with the approval of a Development Agreement.
 2. Addition of building wall area, use of backlighting technology, or the addition of new sign area are not considered a modification and are not permitted.
 3. The image displayed on tall wall signs may change subject to a Zone Clearance process.
 - a. The Zone Clearance shall have a term grant of 6 months, after which the image must be removed. The Director may approve a one-time extension for an additional six month period.

- 5. Lighting and Operational Standards.** All new or modified off-site advertising signs, architectural lighting, and temporary displays shall comply with the following luminance and operational standards.
- a. Hours of Operation: All digital billboards shall meet the following limits for time of day and ambient lighting conditions:
 - i. Sign luminance shall change during each day on the following schedule:
 1. Daytime: From sunrise until 20 minutes prior to sunset, luminance shall not exceed 6,000 candelas per meter squared. Any portions of signs that are less than 10' above adjacent side shall not exceed 2,400 candelas.
 2. Evening: From sunset until 20 minutes prior to sunrise Luminance shall not exceed 300 candelas per meter squared.
 3. After Hours: From 2:00 am until sunrise, no animated content or moving patterns shall be permitted.
 - b. Illuminance
 - i. Illuminance from signs or architectural lights shall not exceed 1.4 foot candles at any adjacent residential zoned property line.
 - c. Digital Sign Control and Transitions.
 - i. Sign luminance shall transition smoothly between the hours of operation limits above over a time period of no less than 20 minutes. All transitions shall be completed so that the maximum allowable luminance is achieved by the stated time listed above.
 - ii. When ambient sunlight illuminance during daytime is less than 100 foot candles for more than one (1) hour, the digital billboard should transition at a smooth rate of change from the daytime luminance level permitted above to the evening luminance level permitted at a suggested rate of no less than 20 minutes.
 - iii. Each image displayed on a digital billboard shall not be refreshed more often than once every 8 seconds.
 - iv. Each image displayed on a digital billboard (i.e., each individual advertisement or artwork) shall fade in from the previous image over no less than one (1) second, and shall fade out over no less than one (1) second to the image of the immediately succeeding content.
 - d. Visual Comfort and Contrast Control
 - i. Digital billboards shall not incorporate driver interaction features.
 - ii. No signs shall use colors or images that replicate or could be confused with traffic safety signage.
 - iii. No signs shall use scrolling text.
 - iv. Signs shall not use stroboscopic or flashing images which rapidly change direction, oscillate, flash or reverse in contrast.
 - v. Animated content and moving images shall be designed specifically for the size and format of the digital billboard
 - vi. Animated content shall not exhibit
 1. Rapidly changing images shall use dissolves for transitions between static images, and between static and animated content;
 2. Sequences that result in visible brightness change over more than ten percent (10%) of the total display area at a greater rate than three (3) changes per second; or
 3. Edits at a rate of more than one (1) edit every three (3) seconds
 - e. Renewable Energy Use.

- i. All new billboard operations shall utilize the highest available clean energy tier from the City's energy provider to the extent feasible.
 - ii. The incremental energy usage attributable to digital signs, as defined in 4.c, should be fully offset to the extent feasible through demonstrated improvement in the energy performance for new buildings or major renovations of existing buildings.
- f. Audio. On site sound shall be allowed only during special events..
- g. Monitoring
 - i. All digital billboard operators shall submit a Lighting Monitoring Report to the Director upon installation, and at three year intervals thereafter to confirm conformance with the lighting requirements above. The report shall include:
 - 1. Digital billboard luminance measured in nits (candelas per square meter). Measurements shall be conducted at the property line of the digital billboard site, or in the nearest adjacent public right of way, perpendicular to the digital billboard sign face.
 - 2. Digital billboard sign illuminance measured in foot candles. Measurements shall be conducted perpendicular to the digital billboard sign face, at the property line containing the digital billboard, and at adjoining residential use property or properties. The illuminance meter shall be aimed toward the sign face from the measurement location.
 - 3. All measurements shall include both luminance and illuminance for three conditions:
 - a. The sign off
 - b. The sign illuminated with an image
 - c. The sign illuminated using an all-white display
 - ii. Complaints about lighting will be investigated by the City, and if determined necessary by the Director, the digital billboard operator shall provide an updated Lighting Monitoring Report within 72 hours of the notice from the City. The City shall reserve the right to conduct digital billboard lighting measurements. If the measured luminance and or illuminance exceed the data presented in operator's Lighting Monitoring Report, the findings of the City report shall prevail.

6. Architectural Lighting. Architectural lighting may be integrated into a building façade to enhance the architectural design of the building if the following requirements are met:

- a. Integral large scale architectural lighting, digital or otherwise, shall contain no commercial logos, images, or messages that may be interpreted as advertising.
- b. Architectural lighting shall not be counted towards permitted signage area, either on or off-site, and shall not be considered a billboard.
- c. Architectural lighting is subject to maximum allowable lighting levels of Section 5.
- d. Architectural lighting shall be designed and operated to minimize impact on adjacent buildings.

7. Temporary Creative Billboards or Tall Walls. Temporary modification to existing billboards or tall wall signs may be permitted in compliance with this section. The following regulations are intended to encourage creatively designed short-term installations that make a positive visual contribution to Sunset Boulevard and to the overall image of the city.

- a. **Approval Authority.** Temporary creative billboards and tall walls are subject to approval by the Director.
- b. **Time Limit.** The Director may approve the placement of a temporary creative billboard or tall wall for a maximum period of 12 months. One six-month time extension may be approved or denied by the Director and the temporary creative billboard or tall wall shall be removed immediately upon expiration. Certain types of physical extensions may be installed for a longer period, as allowed by state law.
- c. **Standards:** A temporary creative billboard or tall wall sign shall be designed and located in compliance with all of the following standards:
 - i. The temporary creative billboard or tall wall sign shall alter an existing sign without changing its location. Any enlargement of the sign shall be designed as an integral part of the image and contribute to the overall creativity of its design.
 - ii. The temporary creative billboard or tall wall sign shall be properly sited and well-integrated within the context of its surroundings.
 - iii. Temporary creative billboard or tall wall shall be an inventive and original representation of the product or business being advertised.
 - iv. The temporary creative billboard or tall wall sign shall exhibit one or more of the following elements:
 1. Three-dimensional props and extensions.
 2. Extensions with cut-out shapes or voids.
 3. Integrated thematic lighting such as neon, LED, images which change from day to night through lighting effects, projected light, video projections, or other emerging technologies.
 4. Moving or animated mechanical elements.
 5. Different day-time and night-time images.
 6. Hand-painted graphics or graphics crafted on-site.
 7. Alternative textures and materials, such as plants and vegetation.
 8. Live action.

9. Innovative technologies such as passive participatory attributes or three-dimensional anamorphic illusions over multiple surfaces.
 10. Text covering the sign surface, when such text is an artistic component of the sign.
 11. Other features as approved by the Director.
- v. The following elements do not qualify as creative for the purposes of a temporary creative billboard or tall wall sign: use of color alone, and/or use of stretched vinyl or similar material.
 - vi. Temporary creative billboards or tall wall signs that incorporate three-dimensional elements and extensions shall also meet the following criteria:
 1. The area of any prop or extension shall not be more than 15 percent of the existing permitted area for tall wall signs or 25 percent of the overall area of the existing billboard sign face, or the maximum area allowed by state law for customary maintenance, whichever is greater.
 2. No extension on any billboard shall exceed 100 feet above the adjacent sidewalk on Sunset Boulevard as taken from the curb at the nearest point to the sign support.
 3. Extensions shall not project more than 25 feet from any edge.
 4. Extensions shall have a distinct shape and shall not be used to uniformly expand the area of the billboard.
 5. Three-dimensional props fully integrated into the artistic theme of the tall wall may be placed on the rooftop of the building above the tall wall sign in a location that is clearly visible from the same viewing angle as the primary plane of the tall wall, subject to a limit of 25 feet above the existing rooftop.
 - vii. Moving or changing visuals shall be timed to not cause driver distraction or interfere with the flow of traffic, or otherwise adversely impact public health, safety, or welfare. Moving or changing visuals shall be designed to minimize the impact on neighboring residential uses.
 - viii. No three-dimensional element or extension to a billboard shall extend or project beyond the property line of the subject site without approval of the Director and express written permission of the adjacent affected property owner(s).
 - ix. Temporary creative billboards or tall wall signs using digital lighting components, arrays and video animation are not permitted.
 - x. Lighting of the creative tall wall signs shall be designed to minimize glare onto other properties and uses. Creative tall wall signs that incorporate thematic lighting or projections shall meet the Lighting & Operational standards above.
8. **Temporary Advertising Installations:** Three-dimensional advertising installations, scenarios, vignettes, or associated ground level displays on outdoor private property shall be permitted per the following criteria
- a. Installations shall be subject to the Special Event Permits section of the WHMC. Approval is subject to review of all pertinent City departments as determined by the Director.

- b. Notwithstanding any requirements in the WHMC, the following shall supersede the requirements related to Special Event Permits:
 - i. The installation is allowed to occupy private and/or public outdoor space.
 - ii. The installation shall last for no longer than 30 days.
 - iii. The installation shall be located within an open space area of no less than 800 square feet, provided the appropriate City review is conducted the 800 square feet may include the public right of way.
 - iv. Installations shall be permitted no more than three times per year, per site.

9. Definitions

2019 Off-Site Sign Survey. The 2019 document that records all existing off-site signage as of the effective date of this amendment. Incorporated herein as *Attachment A*.

Alternative Sign Area. Any sign area intended for display of off-site advertising content as measured by a continuous 1' x 1' grid.

Architectural Lighting. Lighting features using any technology that may be integrated into a building façade that enhances the architectural design of the building.

Animated Content. Illuminated content on a sign that moves or otherwise changes via the use of motion picture or video technology, digital or otherwise.

Billboard. A large panel or display designed to carry outdoor off-site advertising content.

Commercial Content. Text, images, graphics, or objects in an off-site advertising display intended to promote a use, facility, service or product.

Cultural Resource. Please refer to West Hollywood Municipal Code, Chapter 19.90.

Development Agreement. Please refer to West Hollywood Municipal Code, Chapter 19.90.

Development Project. A stand-alone building that may or may not be part of a multi-phase development.

Digital Billboard. A billboard utilizing digital sign technology on an off-site advertising sign face to broadcast a message containing static or animated Content. For the definitions of a digital sign please refer to West Hollywood Municipal Code, Section 19.90.020.

Director. The Director of Planning and Development Services or successor department, or designee.

Existing Billboard/Sign/Tall Wall. Any billboard or tall wall included in the 2019 Inventory of Outdoor Advertising Signs on Sunset Blvd..

Luminance. Calculation (candelas) of amount of light emitted from a light source.

Luminance Transition. The process of smoothly adjusting intensity of luminance between designated levels.

Moving Patterns. Motion oriented Lighting effects that do not convey Commercial Content.

New Billboards. Billboards constructed or erected after the effective date of this amendment.

Off-Site Sign. Please refer to West Hollywood Municipal Code, Chapter 19.90.

Sign Face: The portion of an off-site sign designed to display advertising content. A single billboard may have multiple faces.

Standard Billboard Format. A Billboard face with a horizontally oriented rectangle of 14 x 48 feet, 20 x 60 feet or dimensions of the same proportions.

Temporary Advertising Installations. A temporary advertisement or promotional campaign that involves a series of related three-dimensional objects or structures.

Traditional Billboard. A billboard utilizing print technology to convey the advertising message and requiring physical installation, removal and maintenance of the messaging surface (such as, but not limited to stretched vinyl) on a recurring basis.

Summary of Prior City Council and Commission Actions

In 2014 the City Council established key priorities for a comprehensive update to the policies regulating off-site signage on Sunset, and requested that staff develop policy tools to guide the future of these signs on the Strip. Addressing these priorities resulted in a three part process:

- 1) Develop an ordinance for temporary creative billboards and tall walls (approved January, 2016).
- 2) Seek a partner for the design and operation of the City's own billboard at 8775 Sunset Boulevard as a pilot digital project (approved October 2017).
- 3) Develop a comprehensive policy to amend the Sunset Specific Plan section on off-site advertising.

The following summarizes the City Council, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Committee and Arts, and Cultural Resources Commission actions related to the policy update.

November 5, 2015

In anticipation of a comprehensive update, a focused set of revisions to the existing Zoning Ordinance requirements and procedures for temporary creative off-site signs was presented, and approved by the Planning Commission.

January 19, 2016

The City Council approved the revisions to the Zoning Ordinance that clarify types of temporary creative off-site signs encouraged to support more creative advertising on the Sunset Strip, establish a process for administrative approval for those signs; and provide updated standards for their design and operation.

March 23, 2017

The Art on the Outside Subcommittee heard a presentation on the policy concept for enhancing the public arts presence with a billboard arts program. Arts stakeholders and community members discuss the proposal specifically requesting that the policy ensure a meaningful, high visibility platform for artists, with a commitment to remunerate artists and curators appropriately

April 21, 2017

The Historic Preservation Commission heard a presentation on the policy, with an emphasis on the focus to incentivize preservation of historic resources through allowing designated resources to convert their existing billboards to digital technology. Commission members requested that these projects receive appropriate historic review per the current Secretary of Interior Standards.

June 15, 2017

The Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the proposed Sunset Specific Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments. The Planning Commission supported approval of the 2017 draft policies and amendments.

September 18, 2017

The City Council considered the proposed amendments, including Planning Commission input. The Council requested additional analysis and stakeholder input related to valuation of digital billboards, art as a public benefit, and more explanation on the rationale for the urban design recommendation.

September 4, 2018

City Council heard an update on the item. The Council directed staff to draft final amendments with an added focus on greater flexibility for creative sign project proposals. In addition to their request for flexible options, the Council also directed staff to refine the public arts component, lighting operations technicalities, and competitive application process.

The following chart lists the public discussions on the topic since the 2012 direction from Council to amend the Sunset Specific Plan section related to outdoor off-site advertising:

Date	Public Discussion or Meeting
May 7, 2012	City Council authorization to prepare amendment to the SSP with associated CEQA, and suspend billboard applications
November 19, 2013	Visit West Hollywood Presentation
December 12, 2013	Chamber of Commerce Presentation
February 3, 2014	Stakeholder Meeting
April 7, 2014	City Council Discussion allowing tall wall applications during Signage Study process
April 28, 2014	West Hollywood Heights Neighborhood Association discussion
April 24, 2016	Sunset BID presentation and discussion
November 5, 2015	Planning Commission approval of temporary creative off-site signs and tall walls.
January 19, 2016	City Council approval of ZTA and SSP Amendment for temporary creative off-site signs and tall walls.
February 27, 2017	Stakeholder Community meeting
March 23, 2017	Art on the Outside Subcommittee of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission presentation on the discussion
April 18, 2017	West Hollywood Heights Neighborhood Association meeting
April 21, 2017	<i>Historic Preservation Commission presentation and discussion</i>
June 15, 2017	Planning Commission public hearing on June 2017 Draft Policy
September 18, 2017	First consideration of proposed policy language
September 4, 2018	City Council update on additional analysis
August 2018-March 2019	Chamber of Commerce discussions

4.B. UPDATE ON THE DRAFT ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA [J. KEHO, B. SIEGL, S. LEJEUNE]:

SUBJECT: The City Council will receive an update with additional analysis and proposed revisions to the draft amendments to the Sunset Specific Plan (SSP) and the West Hollywood Zoning Ordinance regarding off-site signage on the Sunset Strip, which will be considered at future public hearings.

Contract Senior Planner Sarah Lejeune provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated September 4, 2018.

GENEVIEVE MORRILL, ON BEHALF OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, spoke regarding the Chamber's billboard committee. She spoke about doing something exciting on the Strip. She noted that the committee and staff have made progress, and mentioned some of the issues that they continue to struggle with.

LAYNE LAWSON, ON BEHALF OF CLEAR CHANNEL, spoke regarding the uniqueness of the Strip. He spoke about various policy elements that he would like to continue to work on with staff.

Councilmember Horvath spoke about over-legislating creativity, and stated that she doesn't agree with a cap on the number of billboards. She discussed the various areas of the Plan that she agrees with and stated that she would like to see more flexibility in the Plan.

Mayor Duran commented on the method for reviewing various aspects of billboard approvals such as declaring historic sites, sign update and remodels, and encouraged giving more authority to the Director of Planning and Development Services. He indicated that there is a need for more flexibility and creativity.

Councilmember Heilman commented on the original reasons for creating development agreements for new signs and encouraging creativity. He spoke regarding the importance of establishing a cap on the number of signs. He expressed concern regarding how a point system might apply to pending applications. He expressed support for the lighting regulations as proposed. He also proposed that first sign that is built be a "pilot project" so that the Council can weigh in on the various aspects lighting, creative, etc.

Mayor Pro Tempore D'Amico discussed the Art Program incentive. He commented that there could be a "good morning, WeHo" moment and a Sunset moment. He asked for clarification from staff about what is allowed under the environmental impact report, and commented that more flexibility is needed.

Councilmember Meister expressed concern with 20 digital billboards, especially since Sunset Boulevard has more of a car culture than pedestrian. She agreed that there should not be a limit on historic sites. She also commented that people may not be able to distinguish between art and ad in a few seconds, and that it may not be a public benefit to our community. She spoke in support of more artistic static billboards instead. She also indicated that the Planning Commission should review height and location changes.

ACTION: Receive the update and direct staff to prepare the final proposed amendments to the Sunset Specific Plan and Zoning Ordinance regarding off-site signage in the Sunset Specific Plan area and return to the City Council for a public hearing at a future date. **Approved by Consensus.**

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE DRAFT ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

INITIATED BY: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
(John Keho, AICP, Interim Director)
(Bianca Siegl, Long Range Planning Manager)
(Sarah Lejeune, Contract Planner)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will receive an update with additional analysis and proposed revisions to the draft amendments to the Sunset Specific Plan (SSP) and the West Hollywood Zoning Ordinance regarding off-site signage on the Sunset Strip, which will be considered at future public hearings.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive this update and direct staff to prepare the final proposed amendments to the Sunset Specific Plan and Zoning Ordinance regarding off-site signage in the Sunset Specific Plan area and return to the City Council for a public hearing at a future date.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

On September 18, 2017, the City Council held a public hearing on the draft proposed Sunset Strip off-site signage policy, which would replace all existing language in the Sunset Specific Plan and make clarifications to the Zoning Ordinance regarding billboards and tall wall signs in the Sunset Specific Plan Area. The revised policy would support the tradition of the Sunset Strip as a place for innovative signage that employs contemporary technology to reflect and enhance the City of West Hollywood's creative identity. The staff report for the initial public hearing, including comments forwarded from the Planning Commission with their recommendation for approval is contained in Attachment A. During their review, the Council provided comments about the proposed off-site advertising vision and policy, outlining key points for further discussion.

This report summarizes the proposed responses to key issues identified by the Council and the community and stakeholder input, identifies the proposed clarifications and technical updates to the draft policy, and provides additional

information regarding potential project types that do not conform with specific aspects of the proposed policy.

The following issues are addressed with revised language that is discussed in detail in this report:

1. Public Benefit and Arts
2. Approval Process for New or Modified Off-Site Signs
3. Minimum Length of Content Segments (Refresh Rate):
4. Density Requirements for Existing Buildings Adding Signage

The report also covers the proposed technical clarifications to the draft policies relating to aggregation of new and existing signage on one site, compliance monitoring of digital operations, and the Planning Commission recommendation for public input for height modifications of existing signs and an updated survey. Four members of the Planning Commission supported the draft policy; one voted against and there were two required abstentions. In addition the report discusses the potential for th types of alternative projects that meet the vision of the policy by adhering to the guiding principles.

Since the City Council last considered this item, Staff met with billboard operators and the Chamber of Commerce for three separate group discussions and conducted numerous meetings with individual stakeholders. This report responds to the Council's requests for additional information with the benefit of additional stakeholder input, a valuation analysis addressing locations for new signs and arts programming strategy by the City's consultants, experience from negotiating for the City's pilot digital billboard project at 8775 Sunset Boulevard, and case study analysis of comparable billboard district policies in Denver and Atlanta. Attachment B includes a synopsis of model programs in those cities that shows how West Hollywood compares regarding incorporating digital billboards into creative media districts with robust public benefit programs.

Guiding Principles

The policy goals for this update propose to bring the billboards of Sunset Boulevard into the 21st century with enhanced design, technology, and community benefit. Following the Council's 2014 direction to update the policy in response to requests for new types of signs that did not meet the existing regulations, the City reached out to the broad Sunset Boulevard community of property owners, billboard operators, businesses, visitors and nearby residents and established the following guiding principles, as described in the draft SSP amendment:

Sign Distribution allows for additional signage distributed to complement the linear experience of Sunset Boulevard.

Design Excellence supports innovative design that integrates signage with architecture and makes sure signage is a good neighbor.

Public Art incorporates arts programming into all new signage and creating a billboard district with opportunity for comprehensive programming that raises the arts presence of the Strip and creates a significant outdoor display of digital art.

Economic Development supports the benefits of integrating media, design, and art to support the economic vitality of the Sunset Strip,

Cultural Resources allows signage opportunities to create incentives for historic preservation, including the potential value increase for converting static signs to digital signs for a limited number of existing signs located on designated cultural resource sites.

The proposed revisions and clarifications meet the above principles, balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders while providing for significant community benefits.

2017 Draft Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy Synopsis

For reference, the following sections outline the basic tools and policy components of the initial draft policy, as reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council in the fall of 2017:

1. Up to 18 *new* billboards (either static or digital) integrated into architecture may be permitted by negotiated development agreements in the following two categories:

- Integrated into new development projects that meet minimum density requirements.
- Integrated into major remodel projects for existing buildings that meet minimum density requirements.

In keeping with the design principles, new traditional pole billboards are not permitted.

2. An overall total of twenty (20) digital billboards (including new signs and existing signs converted to digital) may be permitted along Sunset if they meet specific standards and operating requirements related to light emission and contrast. New digital billboards are a subset of the overall 18 permitted new billboards. Digital billboards may be permitted in two ways:

- Of the 20, a total of 17 billboards may be integrated into new development or a major remodel approved via development agreement.
- Of the 20, a total of three (3) digital billboards may be permitted via development agreement as conversions from existing static signs to digital on designated historic sites. These are not considered new billboards.

3. The policy also facilitates improvements to existing billboards for:

- Maintenance
- Replacement

- Backlighting
- Additional area up to 1,200 SF
- Height modifications due to view obstructions
- Relocation on site
- Addition of a second face

The initial draft policy would allow for alterations of existing tall walls, but does not permit new ones.

Response to Key Policy Questions

This report describes the proposed responses to key questions regarding the 2017 draft policy arising from Council and community input. The sections below include a summary of these issues, noting any difference from the original proposal, along with a brief rationale and methodology.

1. Public Benefit and Arts

Policy Goals:

- *Support on-going digital arts programming opportunities.*
- *Create a one-of-a-kind, arts-focused billboard district, in keeping with the City's creative identity and enhancing the long standing video arts program that exists today*
- *Ensure new signs contribute appropriate public benefits.*

Draft Policy: *Require 25% arts programming on all digital signs, plus revenue-sharing and public space improvements.*

Issues Raised: *Desire for more clarity in public art programming strategy; consider reduction of arts programming and distribution of hours per day/week/month.*

Proposed Modification: *Reduce public art programming requirement from 25% to 17.5% of time on any new digital sign while retaining meaningful additional public benefits.*

- *Arts programming will be reduced, allowing more time for revenue-generating ad content.*
- *Arts Programming will be scheduled at predictable times including a few minutes at the top of each hour (the City's "clock") and once a month ("Second Saturday") for longer focused cultural programming events. All digital boards will be subject to the same schedule requirements to ensure equity and predictability, and to allow the City to promote the billboard district and associated arts programming as described below.*

Results: *Programming art around specific times of day/month creates art opportunities that support West Hollywood's creative identity and strengthen the visibility of the City arts presence on the Sunset Strip, catalyzing spillover benefits to other businesses. This revised approach allows for an increase in the programming time for revenue generating advertising content.*

Sunset Boulevard has one of highest "Out of Home" (OOH) market values in the world, producing high revenue compared to other locations. The City Council requested additional analysis to determine the appropriate amount and type of digital billboard programming used for public benefit. Public benefit is defined in the City's Public Benefit Framework as "physical, programmatic, or monetary contributions to the community from the developer and may include the provision of community facilities, services, programs and other measures, or the monetary equivalent of such items to meet a community need" The City's valuation consultant, Premier Partnerships, estimated that digital billboards on Sunset would generate a minimum of 100% more revenue than static billboards in the same location. Premier's team recommends that the City seek a public benefit package from new digital billboards that is structured differently and of a higher value than the current norm for Development Agreements for static billboards (Attachment C).

Based on multiple meetings with stakeholders, staff is proposing a modified art programming schedule. The art programming would follow an identical schedule on each digital billboard, and be curated by the City. This approach ensures predictability and equity for billboard operators, allows the City to promote digital art programming on the Strip, and creates opportunities for businesses on the Strip, particularly hotels and restaurants, to promote and plan for activities that coincide with the arts programming schedule. The proposed draft programming schedule described below includes several minutes of art at the top of each hour as well as longer periods of art shown one weekend each month. The monthly programming event is informed by the successful models of "First Friday" in Downtown Los Angeles and Venice. The arts programming schedule is currently being refined with input from the Chamber of Commerce Billboard Subcommittee. The following draft schedule represents the most recent iteration under discussion.

- 6.4 minutes arts programming every hour pre-dinner hours. (5 am to 8pm)
- 16.2 minutes evening hours. (8pm to 5am)
- "Second Saturday" Approx. 5 hours total programming one Saturday per month.

The length of arts programming segments for Second Saturday is being evaluated to determine the optimal balance for arts viewers and billboard operators to ensure the appropriate scheduling for revenue generating programming through-out the day.

This arts programming plan allocates the hours for public art where it can be easily promoted as part the City's overall arts identity. This revised programming schedule provides more advertising time during the lucrative hours of highest vehicle traffic, increasing the potential for operator revenue, as well as focusing arts programming on the evening hours when arts patrons will be best able to enjoy the art. *This revised approach to arts programming was generally*

supported by billboard operators and other stakeholders participating in recent discussions with the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce.

Staff proposes that the City maintain control of 25% of total inventory, inclusive of the 17.5% arts programming time. The remaining 7.5% of City controlled content could be earmarked for other negotiated public benefits on a project-by-project basis.

The guidelines and intent for arts programming will be part of the revised language in the SSP document, but the actual public benefit package will be determined through the Development Agreement negotiations for specific projects. Final programming schedules for the Sunset Billboard District will be refined and finalized with the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission and Arts Division staff. Stakeholders and staff will continue to refine the scheduling program to include phased implementation that allows full operation at such time as there are a sufficient number of digital billboards to hold the "Second Saturday" event.

2. Approval Process for New or Modified Off-Site Signs

Policy Goals:

- *Create a transparent approval process that ensures adherence to the City's vision and provides equitable opportunities that produce high-quality billboard projects.*
- *Define priority status for projects with pending applications.*

Draft Policy: *New or converted digital signs require a negotiated development agreement; modifications to existing signs can be approved by staff.*

Issues Raised: *Desire for clarification regarding approval timelines, and discussion about pros and cons of prioritizing projects with pending applications.*

Proposed Modification: *Clarify the approval process by implementing a point system based on key criteria for a clear and predictable merit-based process, similar to the selection process currently in place for cannabis businesses. A limited number of additional points would be allocated for projects with currently pending applications that resubmit proposals in compliance with the new regulations.*

Results: *Allows potential participants to anticipate time-line, costs and expectations; provides additional clarity in approval process.*

The updated proposal for a predictable, merit-based approval process will encourage high-quality applications, in keeping with the primary intent of the policy update. This proposal is modelled on the successful billboard program in Atlanta and the West Hollywood's cannabis application scoring system with the intent of creating a similar program for evaluating billboards. Billboard operators have generally expressed support for establishing a merit-based process, as it provides additional transparency and clarity in the City's decision-making. The

point system concept includes two steps, awarding points for each application based on published criteria:

Step One: Initial screening. Staff will review the proposal for its ability to support the City's goals for the Sunset Strip and its compatibility with the signage and land use vision defined in the Sunset Specific Plan. In response to the Planning Commission and the Council's request for more information about defining priority status for pending applications, staff proposes that one of the criteria would award a limited number of bonus points to pending applications that are revised to meet the approved policy. All applications meeting the minimum point threshold in Step One will be considered for Step Two.

Step Two: Design, cultural resources and arts integration. In the second round, qualified applications will be scored based on the quality of the project design, compliance with the art program, and integration of sign and architecture for optimal urban design. Applications meeting the minimum point threshold in Step Two would be invited to engage in negotiating a Development Agreement for the proposed project.

The scoring system will be an administrative document, rather than being incorporated into the Sunset Specific Plan. Stakeholder input will be invited prior to finalizing the scoring system. Attachment D provides additional information about this concept.

3. Minimum Length of Content Segments (Refresh Rate):

Policy Goals: Encourage custom ad content for Sunset, and reduce potential for driver distraction and light impacts to less than significant.

Draft Policy: Requires 16 second image display time, rather than industry-standard 8 seconds. 16 second refresh rate reduces potential for light-contrast impacts

Issues Raised: Stakeholders requested 8-second refresh rate on all signs.

Proposed Response: Maintain required refresh rate of 16 seconds, but permit exemption with a lighting study. Projects that desire a shorter refresh rate may be considered with submittal of a site-specific lighting study that evaluates the proposed refresh rate for visual distraction and neighborhood impact.

Results of Proposed Revision: Would potentially allow for individual projects to propose shorter refresh rates, subject to additional analysis and compliance with policy goals as established in the Sunset Specific Plan.

The proposed policy calls for a 16 second refresh rate in order to minimize visual distraction and neighborhood impacts. Longer transitions are less disruptive to nearby residential viewers and minimize potential for distracted driving. Billboard operators have requested that the policy be revised to reflect the industry-

standard refresh rate of 8 seconds to facilitate sales packaging similar to elsewhere in the country. Staff proposes maintaining the requirements for the 16 second refresh rate, but to allow shorter refresh rates to be considered with submittal of project-specific site analysis that shows that the shorter refresh rate will not result in visual distraction and potential neighborhood impacts.

4. Density Requirements for Existing Buildings Adding Signage

Policy Goals: Encourage reinvestment in existing buildings by permitting new off-site signs as part of a significant remodel.

Draft Policy: Requires existing buildings requesting new signs as part of a facade remodel to be built to 100% or more of allowable density on that site.

Issues Raised: Allow for greater flexibility in the density requirement for such projects.

Proposed Modification: Apply the same density requirements as proposed for new development projects with signs: minimum 90% density required on the south side of Sunset, where the lots are bigger, and minimum 75% density on the north side of the street. Broaden the applicable project types to include all major remodels (as defined in the Municipal Code) as well as significant façade remodels.

Results: This will increase the number of available sites that could request new signs as part of a remodel.

The proposed policy requires that buildings using the provision for significant facade remodels have existing buildings with 100% or greater of allowable existing density. Staff recommends broadening the definition to include major remodels and significant façade remodels and changing the minimum density for façade remodel projects from 100% to match the requirement for new development, with 90% of allowable density on the south side of Sunset and 75% of allowable density on the north side of the Strip. This revision does not increase the number of permitted new signs, but increases the number of potential sites from approximately 17 to approximately 28 sites.

Technical Revisions and Clarifications

In addition to the key issues described above, staff proposes the following clarifications and technical updates to the draft policy language:

- Clarify aggregation of new and existing signage: Draft SSP amendment was silent on this. Will be revised to allow total area of existing and new static billboards to be combined up to a limit of 3,000 square feet total per site. New signs on buildings with tall walls shall not aggregate signage to increase the size of the tall wall. Total area of digital signage may not exceed 1,000 square feet. This allows for sites with existing static signs to

- re-develop and retain rights to replace existing sign area, and/or combine it with a new sign.
- Clarify digital lighting standards and monitoring: Add language to the SSP describing a lighting monitoring program compatible with Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) industry standards to ensure that requirements are met. Staff is working with representatives from the billboard industry to ensure ease of monitoring and applying standards appropriate for nearby residential uses. Because Sunset Boulevard has nighttime commercial uses adjacent to residential uses, the proposed policy adds requirements to the standard regulations to address contrast between ambient light and emitted light. These standards adhere to the adopted 2016 CalGreen standards, and model lighting ordinances approved by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. Attachment E further describes the rationale for the proposed lighting standards.
 - Provide an additional level of review for height modifications to existing signs: The Planning Commission requested a public hearing, rather than staff approval, for any proposed modifications to the height of existing off-site signs. In order to streamline the process for improvements to existing signs while encouraging public input, staff proposes an increased noticing requirement for staff-approved modifications (including height and sign relocation) to all property owners within 500 feet, rather than requiring a Planning Commission hearing. The proposed language allows for an additional level of notice while permitting the sign owners to make necessary improvements expeditiously.
 - Clarify process for revised applications for entitled but unbuilt projects: The September 18, 2017 City Council staff report (Attachment A) included recommended definition language to define projects that are entitled, but not built, as new development so they may revise their design to include off-site signage and a new, or revised, development agreement process (see Attachment K of Attachment A).
 - Update billboard survey: The survey of existing billboards and tall wall signs included in the draft SSP amendment (2017) will be updated to incorporate any signs built or entitled since the survey was complete, so that the final policy document reflects the most current inventory of billboards on Sunset.
 - Adjust number of recommended digital billboards in Zone 5 from three sites to two and Zone 7 from two sites to three: Based on analysis by Premier Partnerships (Attachment C), staff is recommending these changes to the location guidelines.

Potential Alternative Projects

Council members and some billboard stakeholders have asked how certain project types not expressly permitted under the proposed draft policy might be accommodated. Since the initial adoption of the 1996 Sunset Specific Plan, the document has included language that allows for flexibility for project types that

meet the intent of the policy. The current draft policy amendment regarding off-site signage includes similar technical language specifically addressing advertising signage (see Section 3.K):

“...the City retains discretion to approve an alternative proposals if the alternative proposal is shown to further the visions, goals and polices stated by the Sunset Specific Plan and is consistent with the guiding principles of the urban design vision, design and development requirement, guidelines and standards that would otherwise apply to the project.... Further environmental review in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) may be required for projects that are inconsistent with the approved CEQA analysis.”

The areas where the Planning Commission, City Council, and billboard stakeholders have asked for additional flexibility in the sign policy can generally be accommodated by the above language, subject to (a) a determination that the project is consistent with the guiding principles for signage in the SSP, (b) receiving an appropriate number of points in the scoring system, and (c) conducting project-level CEQA analysis as appropriate. Such potential projects would need to perform exceptionally well on certain components of the scoring system, as they would likely receive lower points in some of the standard categories regarding conformance with the policy, resulting in recommendations for only truly exceptional projects to be considered under the ‘alternative proposals’ language. As requested by Commissioners, Council Members or stakeholders, these could potentially include:

- Projects that do not meet exact specifications for location or number of new billboards. The final policy document will clarify that the maximum number and distribution of new billboards are guidelines, so some flexibility could be allowed. A team of professional urban designers, billboard experts, economic analysts and staff recommended 18 new billboards over 15 years as a reasonable rate of change of approximately 20% that would enhance the Strip and provide opportunities for creative upgrades. The number of sign faces increased by approximately 30% percent since the 1996 approval of the Sunset Specific Plan. The recommended distribution of new billboards is based on the historic linear quality of Sunset Boulevard, topography, and features of Sunset that make it an iconic place. Alternative locations or numbers of signs could be proposed per the requirements listed above.
- New tall wall signs. New tall walls are not expressly permitted under the draft policy in order to address the initial Council direction to avoid adverse land use impacts of advertising signs. During review of the draft policy, Council members expressed interest in allowing some flexibility to accommodate new tall wall signs. After evaluating several potential policy alternatives, staff does not recommend allowing for tall walls in general, or even under prescribed circumstances, as it is impossible to appropriately predict the potential future land use impacts of tall wall signs in multiple

locations. However, the Council would have the ability to consider a new tall wall proposal in the event that it can demonstrate no impacts on future development and meets other requirements above.

- New digital or static billboards on recently constructed buildings. The Council expressed interest in creating opportunities for “reach-back” to allow recently completed projects to also benefit from the policy. If the alternatives requirements above are met, the Council could consider new or digital off-site signs on projects that completed construction during development of the revised Sunset signage policy. This would remove potential opportunities for new signs from other new development or remodel projects.
- New off-site signs on historic properties. In addition to allowing for conversion of existing signs on designated historic properties, a property owner has requested the Council consider allowing for a new historic/neon-style sign on a designated historic property that previously had rooftop signage (see letter from Mark Lehman in Attachment A). Such projects support preservation and maintenance of designated historic properties by creating revenue opportunities for historic sites with existing off-site signage, and allows for potential new signs in historic neon style for a small number of sites with proven earlier signage. The Planning Commission supported this concept and the Council requested that staff consider the idea. There are a limited number of projects that meet the requirements for designation and can prove a historic precedent for signage. These could be eligible for consideration under the parameters for alternative projects as listed above.

The above types of alternative projects would require additional review for consistency with the approved CEQA document in accordance with Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines.

SummaryThe revisions to the proposed policy recommended above respond to the issues raised by stakeholders, community members, Planning Commission, and the City Council. These proposed revisions result from careful analysis and additional input from expert advisers. They provide important refinements while adhering to the guiding principles as defined in the September 18, 2017 draft policy language. Staff recommends that the Council support the above recommended revisions to the September 2017 proposed policy and direct staff to return to Council at a later date with final Specific Plan and Zoning Ordinance language for consideration at a noticed public hearing.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-8: Enhance the Cultural and Creative Life of the Community. OSP-8: Enhance the Cultural and Creative Life of the Community.
- PSG-1: Maintain the City's Unique Urban Balance with Emphasis on Residential Neighborhood Livability. PSG-1: Maintain the City's Unique Urban Balance with Emphasis on Residential Neighborhood Livability.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- LU-16: Maximize the iconic urban design value and visual creativity of signage in West Hollywood. LU-16: Maximize the iconic urban design value and visual creativity of signage in West Hollywood.
- LU-15: Maintain Sunset Boulevard as a regional, national, and international destination for entertainment, and the primary economic engine of the City. LU-15: Maintain Sunset Boulevard as a regional, national, and international destination for entertainment, and the primary economic engine of the City.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

The revisions proposed to the 2017 draft policy update are a result of significant additional analysis and research including case study research, evaluation of similarities with other media districts throughout the country, and additional outreach to billboard industry stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

A CEQA Initial Study was prepared, which determined that the proposed policy would not have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration was prepared and provided to the public, agencies, and the Los Angeles County Clerk. During the public comment period (April 6 to April 27, 2017), the City received 22 comment letters. Responses to these letters are provided in Section 5 of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration included in Attachment A.

In addition to conducting an environmental analysis that found no significant impacts under CEQA, the policy encourages sustainability by requiring that new digital signs be carbon-neutral, meaning that any additional energy required by a digital billboard must be from solar power generated on-site, be purchased from carbon-free sources, or demonstrate offsets to energy use through other means.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Community engagement was extensive for this project; staff met with a large range of stakeholders and community groups. Public input helped to shape the final policy, with input from residents, property owners, billboard companies and other interested parties. Staff has met with the Chamber of Commerce Billboard Subcommittee on three occasions since the September 18, 2017 Council

meeting, as well as meeting individually with a number of stakeholders who had questions or ideas. Additional details on community engagement were provided in the September 18, 2017 staff report. (Attachment A)

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT / LONG RANGE
PLANNING DIVISION

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. September 18, 2017 Council Staff Report.
- B. Summary of programs in Atlanta and Denver
- C. Premier Partnerships Memorandum
- D. Point System Concept
- E. Lighting Memo

SUBJECT: **ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN
AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE
SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**

INITIATED BY: **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**
(Stephanie DeWolfe, AICP, Deputy City Manager, Director)
(John Keho, AICP, Assistant Director)
(Bianca Siegl, Long Range and Mobility Planning Manager)
(Sarah Lejeune, Contract Senior Planner)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will consider an amendment to the Sunset Specific Plan (Billboards and Tall Walls) and the West Hollywood Zoning Ordinance (Off Site Signs and Prohibited Signs) to update the off-site signage policy, adopting new billboard regulations and an associated public art program on Sunset Boulevard.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the City Council hold the public hearing, consider all pertinent testimony, discuss and provide direction for preparation of a final ordinance.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Executive Summary

This item presents a comprehensive update to the City's policies regulating off-site signage (billboards and tall wall signs) on the Sunset Strip, in response to the City Council's request for a new set of policy tools with which to guide the future of off-site advertising signs on the Strip. Billboards have long been integral to the Sunset Strip's success as an economic and cultural resource for West Hollywood. The proposed policy addresses the desire to re-establish the tradition cutting-edge advertising signs that positively contribute to the vibrant cultural life and experience of the Strip.

Responding to the City Council's direction to develop new billboard policy that addresses *creativity, aesthetics, land use balance, new technology, and quantity*, the proposed regulations allow for no more than 18 new billboard faces to be installed over the next 15 years. The policy allows for most of these new billboards to be digital to address demand for creative technology. Existing billboards will be easier to upgrade, and new billboards will be integrated into new buildings. The policy supports modifications to tall walls, rather than permitting new ones. Finally, billboards will provide a portion of their programming time for public art, creating the foundation for the first outdoor digital art "museum" of its kind.

Discussion Issues

In this initial public hearing, staff requests feedback from the Council regarding key components of the proposed policy for off-site signage in the Sunset Specific Plan area (described in further in subsequent sections of this report). The project team will return to the Council at a subsequent meeting with a policy document for approval. Confirmation of the following will aid the project team in refining the policy to meet the Council's vision:

1. Quantity of new sign opportunities.
2. Quantity and distribution of digital sign opportunities:
 - a. Conversions of existing signs to digital on designated historic properties
 - b. Digital signs integrated in façade remodel projects
 - c. Digital signs integrated in new development projects
 - d. Distribution of signs along the strip, with no new digital in the central (Sunset Plaza) area, though conversions would be allowed here.

**TOTAL POTENTIAL
DIGITAL SIGNS:**

CONVERSIONS OF EXISTING BILLBOARDS	3	} 20 VIA NEW POLICY
NEW SIGNS	17	
DIGITAL SIGNS IN PROGRESS (PRIOR TO POLICY)	4	
EXISTING 'LARGE SCREEN VIDEO SIGNS'	4	

3. Allow modifications to existing tall wall signs, but no new tall walls.
4. Require significant public benefits, including improvements to public space on Sunset, as part of any Development Agreement for advertising signage.
5. Restrict light emission for digital signs beyond outdoor advertising industry standards to reduce impacts on nearby residents.
6. Require significant display of public art on all digital.
7. Give priority status to pending sign applications by reserving one of the limited new sign opportunities for any project that confirms a desire to modify its proposal and move forward in a timely fashion.

Any increase in allowable lighting levels, number of static or digital billboards, or reallocation for new digital billboards, or allowing for new tall wall signs, would likely require additional CEQA analysis. As directed, staff would conduct additional analysis and return to Council with a revised recommended policy.

Background

Billboards have long been an integral part of the Sunset Strip's experience, symbolizing the light, energy, and unique creative environment of the Strip. The Strip is a world-famous place, unparalleled for its curving length, groundbreaking music scene, and creative culture. Its billboards once drew visitors to see unique content, with one-of-a-kind images promoting the hottest musicians and entertainers. And while today's billboards and tall wall signs are still very much part of the urban and visual experience on The Strip, they no longer reflect the energy and creative spirit of Sunset. The City Council requested that staff develop a better set of policy tools with which to guide the future of off-site advertising signs on The Strip.

Prepared with extensive analysis and input from staff, technical consultants, industry experts, and community stakeholders, the proposed policy carefully balances the concerns and interests of multiple stakeholders on the Strip. It also responds to the desire to continue the Sunset Strip's tradition as a place for cutting edge advertising, music, and culture. The updated billboard policy becomes one of the tools for reenergizing the Strip, helping to preserve and enhance this beloved urban place. Beginning with the vision that, if carefully managed, billboards may have the potential to act as a creative and economic catalyst for a re-vitalized Sunset Strip, the policy responds to the needs of adjacent neighborhoods, property owners, billboard operators, local businesses and the broader West Hollywood community. The new policy will reinvigorate Sunset, maintaining the cool factor and bringing new relevance to the thrill of being on Sunset and finding the cultural pulse of the City displayed on the billboards.

The draft Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy proposes a regulatory framework that would allow for no more than 18 new billboard faces to be installed over 15 years. The policy also allows for a limited number of digital sign faces, carefully regulated with strict limitations on light and glare, and with a portion of their programming designated for the display of public art. The policy also facilitates improvements to existing billboards. The emphasis is on new billboards integrated into new buildings or major upgrades to existing buildings, and the policy does not permit new traditional stand-alone billboards. With the requirements for integration creating some of the benefits of tall walls, the policy supports modifications to existing tall wall signs, rather than allowing for new ones. The policy framework and design standards provide a strong set of tools with which to guide the future of advertising signage on Sunset Boulevard so that signs are positive contributors to the urban landscape. Finally, the proposal includes an innovative arts program, creating the foundation for the first outdoor digital art "museum" in the world, and attracting new visitors to support local businesses.

The key issues that the Council asked staff to address in the revised signage policy, and tools that address these issues, are summarized in the table below, and described further in this staff report:

Key Issues	Policy Solutions
<p><i>Encourage creativity in offsite signage. Facilitate production of more creative signs and establish a minimum expectation of excellence in the built environment.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage unique advertising content. • Allow a limited number of new animated digital billboards, as well as traditional static billboards. • Allow for limited temporary creative advertising installations in locations that do not currently have billboards. Require significant opportunities for the display of public art on billboards. • Sunset Billboard District to elevate the profile of signs on Sunset, and facilitate coordinated arts and special event programming on the signs.
<p><i>Improve the aesthetics of sign structures and better integrate signs into the architecture and urban design of the Strip.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage integration of new signage into creative architecture and urban design with clear design guidelines. • Encourage upgrades to existing building by allowing for opportunities to integrate new billboards in to major remodel projects. • Provide opportunities to convert existing billboards on historic properties to digital. • Facilitate upgrades to existing billboards and tall wall signs. • Require improvements to a building's street frontages and to nearby sidewalks as part of any new billboard project.
<p><i>Address non-desirable land use patterns driven by signage. Develop strategies that minimize the dominant role billboards have assumed in driving or limiting development along the Strip.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for modifications to existing tall walls, and prohibit new tall wall signs. • Require sightline studies for modified billboards and limit locations for new billboards so that they do not negatively impact the development potential of adjacent properties. • Prohibit new stand-alone signs, and ensure new signs are integrated with buildings, prohibiting new stand-alone signs on underdeveloped properties.
<p><i>Consider, and appropriately regulate digital signage on Sunset. Stay ahead of rapidly changing technology that allows for creative digital signs as well as greater interactivity with the public via smartphones.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow a limited number of new animated digital billboards, distributed along the length of the Strip. • Provide strict limitations on brightness and contrast of digital billboards. Digital technology allows greater control over animation and brightness with sensors. • Prohibit animated advertisements between 2 and 6 AM. • Encourage content that facilitates interactivity with pedestrians. • Attract visitors to the Strip with integrated digital art displays on advertising signs.
<p><i>Explore methods for capping the total amount of off-site signage on the Strip.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit new sign opportunities to 18 additional billboards over 15 years, representing approximately a 20% increase over the existing sign inventory. • Allow for improvements to the 96 existing sign faces.

In order to give the Council time to fully consider the nuances of the multiple stakeholders, staff suggests that the Council receive the staff presentation, hear public comment, and discuss the policy, providing additional direction as necessary for finalizing the ordinance. The final policy language would be brought to a subsequent meeting.

RESEARCH AND EXPERT OPINION INFORMS THE POLICY

The 1996 Sunset Specific Plan allowed for improvements to existing billboards, as well as opportunities for creative new off-site signage, including on the sides of buildings (Tall Walls). Over time, numerous projects that did not meet exact regulations but addressed the intent of the SSP policy, such as Tall Walls that appeared to cover windows, or oversized unique billboards, were approved via individual development agreements. The off-site advertising industry has progressed, utilizing new technology and attracting new advertisers. Decision-makers identified the need for a revised off-site sign vision to provide flexibility and creativity while addressing the City's desire to maintain high quality, creative off-site advertising that promotes cultural relevance.

Research

A team of staff, working closely with land use and signage experts, evaluated Sunset Boulevard from urban design, economic, and geographical perspectives. The team created an updated inventory of existing off-site signs (Attachment A *Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy*, Appendix), as well as comparisons to other places noted for creative off-site signage such as Times Square, Las Vegas and Tokyo, concluding that the geography and history of Sunset Strip requires a unique approach (Attachment B, *Billboard Research and Analysis Summary*). The team also conducted separate analyses of the financial relationship between development and signage, and contemporary practices relating to light emission and driving. Outreach efforts included community meetings and discussions with outdoor advertising companies, property owners and industry experts, and led to a multi-layered approach that preserves and enhances an iconic public place.

Public Outreach

The project team conducted broad outreach to develop the policy framework goals and vision. The project team has held a series of outreach meetings to discuss the draft policy, speaking with property owners and billboard operators, community members, the Chamber of Commerce, Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission Art On the Outside Subcommittee, Planning Commission Long Range Planning Subcommittee, Historic Preservation Commission, Sunset BID, WeHo Heights Neighborhood Association and holding an open community discussion. The project website at www.weho.org/sunsetsigns reports the progress of the project and provides links to all process documents.

Response from the business community has been largely positive. Some stakeholders have focused on seeking a higher number of digital conversions of existing signs and lighting standards that align with the higher light emission standards permitted in other

areas of the country. Residential community members expressed concerns related to the number of digital billboards, suggesting that a smaller number is preferable. Residents' comment letters (included in the IS/ND in Attachment C, Exhibit D) request that community benefits be invested in the Sunset area. The community supported the potential for high caliber art and architecture, but sought more information about how the policy would ensure the success of these concepts. Arts stakeholders and community members also requested the commitment to remunerate artists and curators. The City is researching appropriate payment schedules for curators, leasing and commissioning digital artwork.

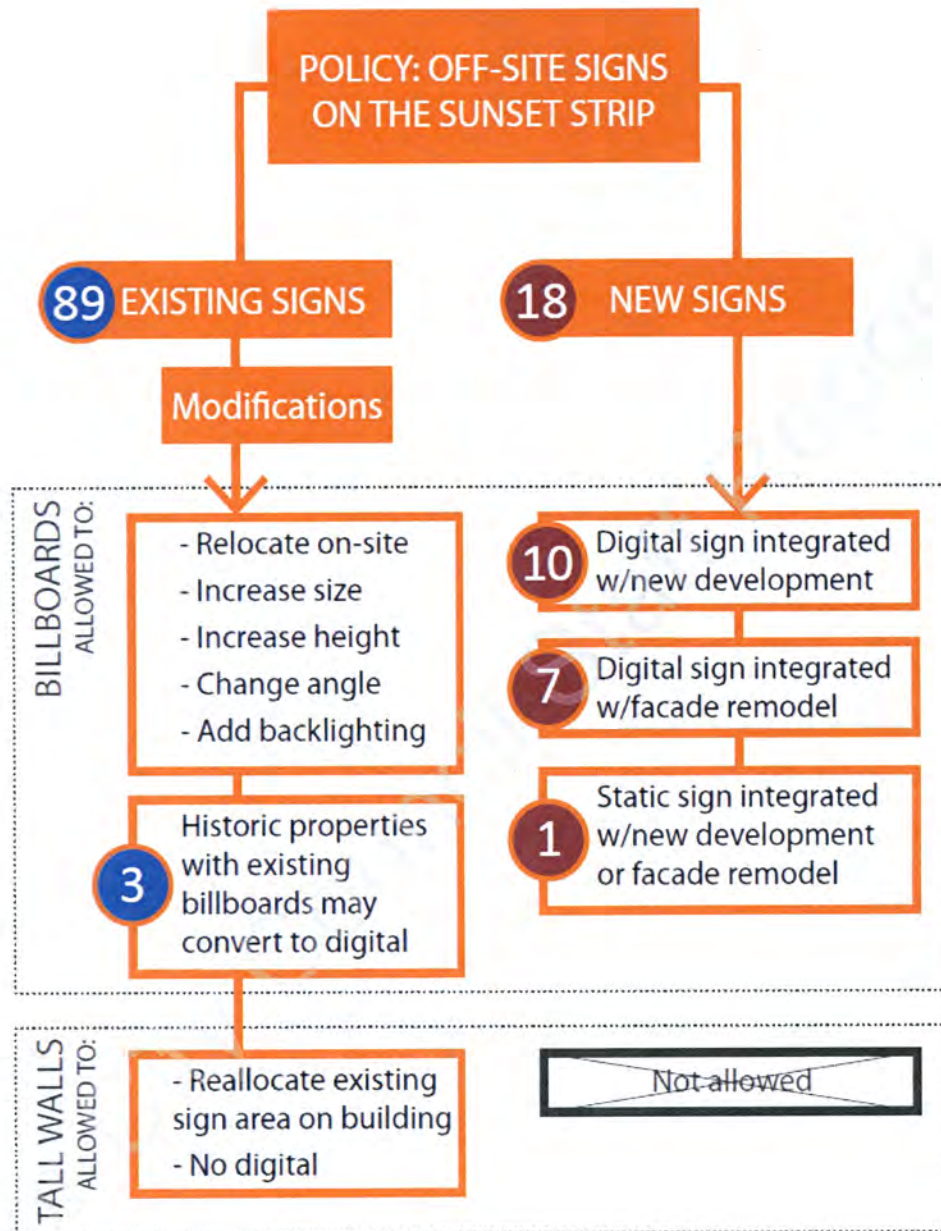
To address comments, Staff made minor changes and clarifications to the draft policy circulated with the Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration. These minor edits do not alter the environmental findings or require recirculation of the environmental document. The language changes are included in the final draft in Attachment A.

On June 15, 2017 the Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the proposed policy, and made specific comments that are included below under Planning Commission and Community Input on page 12 below.

HOW THE POLICY WORKS

The policy for off-site signage in the Sunset Specific Plan area is designed to provide a strong, but flexible, framework to guide any future proposed off-site signage projects so that they positively contribute to the character of the Strip. All policy language regulating such signs is included in a stand-alone amendment to the Sunset Specific Plan, replacing all existing language for off-site signage in that Plan. The policy update also requires an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, moving all policy language for advertising signs on Sunset to one consolidated location in the Specific Plan (see Attachment D, E and F for Planning Commission Resolution Number 17-1203, staff report and Planning Commission minutes).

Through a rigorous analysis process, the project team developed guiding principles that address and enhance the specific sign typologies, character, design excellence, public art, and evolving urban patterns along the Sunset Strip. The proposed policy is a comprehensive set of regulations and guidelines that implement these guiding principles. The following sections describe the specific policy tools proposed to support the evolution of off-site signage on the Strip.



1. New Signs

To address the appropriate balance between old and new, the team determined that the increment of new signage should be up to approximately 20% more sign faces than exist today. There are currently 89 sign faces on Sunset, and this policy would allow for up to 18 more new signs over a 15 year period. The number of sign faces has increased by approximately 30% percent since the 1996 approval of the Sunset Specific Plan. The recommendation of no more than 18 new, architecturally integrated, signs supports change without over-saturating the visual and economic environment, at a rate of change that is somewhat slower than what the Strip has experienced in the past 20 years.

The maximum of 18 new signs will be integrated into (a) new development projects or (b) significant façade remodels of existing high-density buildings and subject to (c) strong urban design guidelines. No new stand-alone traditional billboards on a pole will be allowed. Sign size is calculated based on project square footage with a maximum of 1500 square feet per project. (Traditional billboard formats are 14x48 or 20x60 feet, or up to 1200 square feet.) Projects incorporating new signs must also provide for significant community benefits, including improvements to public spaces on Sunset.

- (a) New Development: Require new development projects with integrated signs to maximize the development potential of the property, addressing the topography and site conditions of Sunset with separate requirements for the north and south side of the Boulevard. New development applying for signage must be developed to at least 75% of allowable density on the north side and 90% of allowable density on the south side of the street.
- (b) Significant Facade Remodels: Any existing buildings that integrate a new sign as part of a significant façade remodel must be at or above the maximum density allowed by the SSP, and must improve aesthetics, material quality, and pedestrian orientation. By permitting new signage with a significant facade remodel the policy creates opportunities for existing high-density buildings to upgrade and improve existing building stock and the appearance of Sunset Boulevard without adding significant square footage. The new billboard must be thoughtfully integrated into the building design. The land use analysis identifies approximately 22 potential sites at or above maximum allowable density. Recently completed buildings on Sunset that are at or above density would be eligible.
- (c) Urban Design Guidelines: Section A of the draft *Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy* outlines parameters for integration of billboards and architecture, including regulating the size and number of off-site signs per development project (Attachment A). The square footage of the project is a defining factor, so smaller projects would have commensurately smaller signs. This approach supports development opportunities while discouraging land uses solely dictated by signage.

2. Digital Signs

The recommended policy proposes opportunities for up to 20 well-distributed digital billboards (a) over 15 years. The 20 digital signs are divided into categories - 17 of these may be used by the new billboard opportunities described above, while the remaining three may be digital conversions of existing billboards on historic properties (b), as follows:

- Integrated with major façade remodels: improvements to the exterior of buildings that are at, or above, maximum allowable density, and provide improvements to the public realm: 7

- Integrated into new construction: 10
- Conversions of existing traditional billboards to digital on sites with designated cultural resources: 3

To control light emissions to a comfortable amount (c), digital signs are limited to a maximum of 1000 square feet (the remaining allowable area of a sign, up to 500 additional square feet, may be traditional/non-digital).

- (a) Distribution: Thoughtful distribution of the digital signs enhances the journey along the Sunset Strip with a continuous vibrant experience. This distribution capitalizes on the linear progression of the Boulevard. New digital billboards are allocated to the eastern and western regions while preserving the low scale urban design of the central region by prohibiting new billboards there. Responding to the linear nature and unique topography of Sunset, digital billboards are spread along the Strip in Billboard Zones that approximate the SSP Geographic Areas (see Attachment A, Figure 2). Areas with key intersections or opportunities for public open space on the western region of the Strip benefit from a slightly higher concentration of digital boards.
- (b) Incentives for Preservation of Cultural Resources: With constant development pressure, preserving cultural resources on the Strip (historic sites and buildings) requires meaningful incentives. A recent City survey identified 109 potential cultural resources on the Sunset Strip, of which 10 include existing billboards, (Attachment G) The proposed policy would allow up to three designated cultural resources that have existing billboards to convert those signs to digital signage. This provides a significant financial incentive for designation. The chart in Attachment G lists the existing billboard sites that have been identified as eligible for designation in a recent Citywide historic survey, and which have an existing

billboard on site. The opportunities for these digital conversions are not limited to certain locations, as are the opportunities for new digital signs, above.

- (c) Lighting and Contrast Regulations: Carefully controlled lighting is essential to ensure that signs are good neighbors. As noted in the technical studies, high contrast of emitted light that is 30 times greater than the surrounding ambient light may disturb the human eye. To prohibit disturbing high contrast images, the policy requires an automatic sensor to control light level reduction as ambient light levels shift in the evening and night hours, and include monitoring regulations for all billboard-related light emissions. *Section 3.E* of the draft *Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy* (Attachment A,) defines light measurements for both the surface of the sign and spillover light. The *Memorandum from Frances Krahe and Associates*, included in the environmental analysis (Attachment C) provides additional technical information.

Based on the recommendations of consulting lighting designers and the adopted state requirements for light emission, the proposed light regulations are more restrictive than typical billboard regulations, including those of the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA), while still allowing for excellent visibility of advertising images. The proposed light emissions standards are also significantly more restrictive than the current operations for the two existing Large Screen Video Signs on Sunset Boulevard. The traffic consulting firm, Fehr and Peers, prepared updated recommendations for regulating digital signage to address contrast reduction distraction (see Attachment C, Appendix E). Their study finds that the proposed policy follows or exceeds best practices for controlling safe levels of contrast between emitted light and ambient light. Requirements tailored to an urban area with high ambient light and relatively low traffic speeds avoid the potential downsides of typical digital billboards in other settings.

3. Modifications to Existing Signs

Given limited opportunities for new signs, the existing 89 sign faces on Sunset Boulevard represent a significant opportunity to enhance the quality of outdoor advertising on the Strip. The policy facilitates a number of significant improvements to existing signs, allowing sign owners and operators to maximize their value and improve the quality of their signs.

(a) Existing Traditional Billboards: The proposed policy increases flexibility for improvements to existing traditional billboards, allowing:

- Overall maximum size of 1200 square feet,
- Backlit signs to reduce glare from floodlighting, and
- One-time opportunity to be approved for additional height of up to 14 feet above the height limit on the parcel in order to clear a proven visual obstruction (such as a street tree).

All existing off-site signs modifications, except conversion to digital technology, may be approved at the staff level, provided all sightline, view-shed, and light monitoring requirements are met.

(b) Tall Wall Signs: The proposed policy allows for existing tall walls to apply for modifications that re-allocate sign area on the building to address changed conditions or improve design. Any change to a tall wall must be approved via a development agreement.

4. Public Art and the Sunset Boulevard Billboard District

A Billboard District with an arts programming component is key to ensuring that new billboards support the unique Sunset Strip experience. This policy creates a Sunset Strip Billboard District that implements the continuation of the long standing synergy between off-site advertising and the cultural pulse of West Hollywood. With a requirement for all digital billboards to contribute programming time to art, the Strip will add cutting edge digital advertising and outdoor art as one of its features.

Based on the programming concepts outlined below, the video art will add an innovative experience, unique to the Sunset Strip. The proposed City-operated District creates opportunities for viewing the newest in video art, including the potential for music video, in the following formats:

- (a) *Top of the Hour*: Cultural programming on all digital billboards, such as art, music, or historical footage, playing at the top of the hour to function as a contemporary clock "chime".
- (b) *Sunset Moments*: Extended cultural programming on all digital billboards three evenings per week, publicized and timed to coincide with happy hour or show times.
- (c) *Events*: Extended programming that coincides with Citywide events such as Pride Halloween or concert events.
- (d) *Sunset Boulevard Billboard Arts Festival*: Once a critical mass of participating billboards is in place, the City may host a festival event with a coordinated program featuring video art installations on billboards augmented by live performance and/ or other events.

Operation of the arts programming and selection of content will be funded by a Sunset Billboard District fee charged to the operators. The District operations fee covers curation by experts hired by the City with artwork approved by the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission. As proposed, the arts program allows both internationally recognized and emerging artists to showcase a variety of digital and video art while enhancing the City's creative brand. For traditional billboards, the policy requires art displays for a minimum of four days (or monetary equivalent) per year. For digital billboards, the policy requires 25% of the programming (15 minutes per hour equivalent) be dedicated to art, which includes a small percentage for public service announcements as necessary. Attachment H describes a sample arts programming schedule.

Value Enhancement for Advertising Signs

The City's asset valuation consultant, Premier Partnerships, states in their memo (Attachment I), that the proposed one-of-a-kind signage District will significantly increase the value for all off-site advertising on Sunset. Each new and modified off-site

sign shall become part of the District, allowing for both coordinated advertising campaigns that include three dimensional creative components (see below for descriptions of Temporary Creative Installations), as well as arts programming. The District operations costs will be funded through an annual operation fee from all participating signs. Following approval of the policy framework, staff will return to the Council with detailed specifics for the District operations, options for arts programming events, and an operations fee proposal.

5. Implementation: Project Review and Approval Processes

The project review and approval process is carefully tailored to best support the billboard policy vision and goals. The permitting process has been the subject of much interest by stakeholders, particularly sign operators and property owners. This section describes the approval process for each key sign type (a-c), as well as how the pending applications (d), currently on hold, will be addressed.

The proposed SSP amendment requires that all new and digital billboards and modified tall walls be approved via the development agreement process. Development agreement negotiations will be guided by established Citywide community benefit priorities. Community members have expressed the desire for a portion of the community benefit funds to be applied to improvements on Sunset Boulevard to improve pedestrian amenities and access to the hillside communities (Attachment C, Section 5).

- (a) Improvements to existing signs: All improvements to existing billboards, except for digital conversion on historic sites, may be approved by the planning staff within the Community Development Department.. All modifications to existing tall wall signs will require a negotiated Development Agreement.
- (b) Digital billboard conversions on historic properties: Property owners of potentially eligible sites must simultaneously apply for cultural resource designation of the property and a Development Agreement to convert their existing billboard to digital. Projects in this category could proceed on a first-come, first-served basis, allowing the first three designated cultural resource sites to convert a traditional billboard to digital, in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards as reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission, and with successful negotiation of a Development Agreement and approval by the City Council. Examples of properties that are eligible for designation and have a billboard include the Whisky, and Carney's
- (c) New billboards as part of new development projects or façade remodels: All such projects require a negotiated Development Agreement and approval by the City Council. Examples of past significant façade improvements include the Luckman building at 9200 Sunset Boulevard and the IAC building at 8833 Sunset. Normally a significant facade change can be approved at staff level. Since these facade remodels will be approved via Development Agreement in order to accommodate a new billboard, a public hearing before the Planning Commission and approval by the City Council and will be required. The existing design review process would be augmented with billboard design specialists to aid the Urban Design Committee.

(d). Pending Applications (Priority Status Projects): The City received 21 applications for new billboards on or before September 2012. Seven of these applications proceeded per the direction of the City Council. Fourteen projects remained on hold, pending adoption of the policy update. Following adoption of a policy, all pending applicants will have the opportunity to modify their projects to conform to the proposed new regulations. Not all sites with pending applications will be able to conform to the revised policy framework, and staff anticipates that not all eligible sites may opt to move forward, as projects would require substantial investment and/or redevelopment of certain properties. Any applicants who confirm intent to modify their applications within 45 days after the effective date of the policy will receive Priority Status. Priority Status shall be the opportunity to reserve an opportunity for a new or digital sign and process applications within strict time limitations. Attachment J describes the administrative guidelines for Priority Status processing timeframes. The suggested selection processes below encourage a high caliber of design proposal:

- *Digital Billboards as Part of New Development Projects*: Due to the complexity of addressing a new development project and billboard simultaneously, these will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for entitlement via Development Agreement. Priority Status projects will be considered in advance of new applications.
- *Digital Billboards as Part of Significant Facade Remodels*: A juried competition process is desirable in order to promote a high level of creativity and to best implement the established policy goals. Staff suggests that Priority Status projects proceed on a first-come, first-serve basis, and new applications for significant facade remodels be considered through a competition process. Once all Priority Status projects have been identified, a competition for new applications would follow shortly afterwards.

6. Temporary Creative Advertising Installations

In addition to the existing opportunities for temporary creative billboards and tall wall signs, the policy provides for a limited number of three-dimensional Temporary Advertising Installations at ground level for 30 days, regardless of whether a property is fully developed or has existing off-site signs.

PLANNING COMMISSION AND COMMUNITY INPUT

On June 15, 2017 the Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the proposed policy. Eight speakers addressed the commission with comments relating to the technical aspects of lighting and programming, the amount of arts programming, and the number of billboards, location, and potential view impacts. The Planning Commission conducted a robust discussion, and unanimously supported approval of the proposed policies and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Sunset Specific Plan. The Planning Commission adopted resolution, staff report, and meeting minutes are included for reference in Attachments D, E and F. During their deliberations, the

Planning Commission suggested that the City Council consider the following potential modifications to the proposed policy:

1. The Planning Commission suggested that any modifications to the height of existing signs might require a heightened level of review, and should be reviewed by the Planning Commission, rather than approved at the staff level.

The one time height modification allowance is intended to facilitate improvements to existing billboards and reduce conflicts with street trees. Additional review steps would lengthen the project timeline and may not provide as much of an incentive for such modifications.

2. Responding to requests from members of the off-site advertising industry who sought a more standardized advertising format, the Planning Commission suggested that the City Council revise the proposed digital programming requirements to allow for the industry-standard of 8 seconds per advertisement, rather than the 16 seconds proposed in the policy.

The draft policy proposal suggests a 16 second segment as a means to encourage development of original advertising content, and to reduce the number of segment transitions per minute, minimizing distraction. However, allowing for 8-second segments would not significantly alter the ability of the policy to achieve its goals.

3. The Planning Commission suggested that from 10pm-2am, lighting levels should be lowered by 20%, and then lowered further after 2 AM.

The current policy language limits the light emission after sunset to 300 nits, already below the industry's typical 600 nit night-time emission standards. Staff recommends that the nighttime emission level remain at 300 nits. No animation is allowed after 2 AM.

4. Planning Commission recommended that several clarifying changes be made to the Existing Sign Inventory (included in the draft policy) to list existing substandard/nonconforming signs that are not subject to the policy, and to clarify numbering.

These changes will be reflected in the final policy documents, and are noted in Recommended Changes to Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy (Attachment K)

5. The Planning Commission recommended that the Council consider whether to direct staff to investigate allowing for additional new off-site signage on designated historic properties that previously had neon or other advertising signage on the original building, as proposed in the letter in Attachment L.

This proposal for additional incentives for signs on historic buildings would require additional analysis to determine how many potential sites could comply, and if additional CEQA evaluation would be required based on the number of

sites to which the policy would apply. If the Council wishes to direct staff to evaluate this proposal, such analysis and development of recommendations could take place following approval of the proposed policy framework, and could be proposed as an amendment.

In addition, the Planning Commission discussed community comments relating to the amount of arts programming. Off-site advertising operators expressed concern that the proposed allocation of time for public art display would cut too deeply into advertising revenue. Members of the public spoke in favor of the arts, and it was noted by staff that the current percentage of public art on the existing Video Art Billboards is approximately 22%. Some Commission members commented that the number could be higher to provide a greater arts component, or additional time for City public service announcements. The Commission supported 25% as an appropriate amount of arts programming to meet the City's goals for arts presence on Sunset. Approving this policy without arts programming requirements would reduce the economic benefit to local businesses and property owners, and benefit only the billboard owners.

Additional comments and requests related to clarifying the definition of new development and correcting typographical errors are addressed in the Recommended Changes to Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy (Attachment K). These, along with any additional Council direction, will be included in the final policy document.

PILOT PROJECT

In addition to analysis and research, staff is conducting a parallel work effort to develop the City's own pilot project with a digital display at 8755 Sunset Boulevard. The City team is working with Orange Barrel Media, Tom Wiscombe Architects, and the Museum of Contemporary Art to progress the design and apply the proposed policy standards to this project. Discussion about the percent of art programming, light emission, and operations requirements were applied to the evolving design of the City's Spectacular project and the market viability of proposed operations was confirmed with the Spectacular team. The environmental analysis (negative declaration) for the project will begin circulation in September and the contact and schematic design will be brought to Council in the fall.

NEXT STEPS

Following adoption of a new signage framework for Sunset, the project team, in close consultation with the City's Arts Division, will develop the Sunset Strip Billboard District operations specifics, including schedule, vision and scope for arts programming, and the operations fee, with recommendations for remuneration standards for artists and curators.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing

Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-8: Enhance the Cultural and Creative Life of the Community.
- PSG-1: Maintain the City's Unique Urban Balance with Emphasis on Residential Neighborhood Livability.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- LU-16: Maximize the iconic urban design value and visual creativity of signage in West Hollywood.
- LU-15: Maintain Sunset Boulevard as a regional, national, and international destination for entertainment, and the primary economic engine of the City.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

When billboard applications are submitted in compliance with the proposed policy, staff will include an evaluation of the program overall with applicable staff reports. This will include where the sign projects fits in with the policy and will ensure adequate tracking of signage types and quantity.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

An Initial Study determined that the proposed policy would not have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore, a Negative Declaration was prepared (Attachment C). The public comment period was from April 6 to April 27, 2017. The City received 22 comment letters which are addressed in Section 5 of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration (Attachment C).

Further the policy encourages sustainable billboards by requiring that new digital signs must be carbon-neutral, meaning that any additional energy required by a digital billboard must be from solar power generated on-site, be purchased from carbon-free sources, or demonstrate offsets to energy use through other means.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Community engagement was extensive for this project, with staff meeting with a large range of stakeholders and community groups. Public input helped to shape the final policy, with input from residents, property owners, billboard companies and other interested parties. Additional detail on community engagement is provided earlier in this staff report.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT / LONG RANGE & MOBILITY
PLANNING DIVISION

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. SSP Amendment to part 2, Section 8, *Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy*
- B. Billboard Research and Analysis Summary
- C. Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration
- D. Planning Commission Resolution Number 17-1203
- E. Planning Commission Staff Report (June 15, 2017)
- F. Planning Commission Minutes (June 15, 2017)
- G. Map: Potentially Eligible Cultural Resources with Existing Billboards
- H. Proposed Art Programming Concept
- I. Premier Partnerships District Valuation Analysis
- J. Priority Status Project Processing Time Line
- K. Recommended Changes to Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy
- L. Letter from Mark Lehman dated August 23, 2017

SUBJECT: ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN
AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE
SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

INITIATED BY: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
(Bianca Siegl, Long Range and Mobility Planning Manager)
(Sarah Lejeune, Contract Senior Planner)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT

The Planning Commission will consider a request for an amendment to Part 2, Section 8 of the Sunset Specific Plan, amendment to Sections 19.34.080 and 19.34.090 of the West Hollywood Zoning Ordinance, (Regulations pertaining to Off Site Signs and Prohibited Signs), and an associated Initial Study/Negative Declaration to adopt new policies regulating off-site signage (Billboards and Tall Walls) on Sunset Boulevard.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission hold the public hearing, consider all pertinent testimony, and recommend approval to the City Council by adopting the following:

- 1) Draft Resolution No. PC 17-1207: **A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COM-MISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE SUNSET BOULEVARD OFF-SITE SIGNAGE POLICY; APPROVE AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS §19.34.080 AND §19.34.090 OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE, TO STRIKE OUTDATED SIGNAGE LANGUAGE AND REFERENCE THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN; AND APPROVE A RESOLUTION AMENDING PART TWO, SECTION 8 OF THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN TO ADOPT THE NEW SUNSET BOULEVARD OFF-SITE SIGNAGE POLICY, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.**

BACKGROUND

The Sunset Strip is a unique destination, globally recognized for its vibrant combination of signs, entertainment, and nightlife, and boasts the densest concentration of off-site signage (billboards and tall-walls) on the west coast. This vibrant area brings visitors both day and night, and is a major economic engine for West Hollywood. The Strip has a long tradition of innovative and memorable signage, becoming famous in the 1960s and '70s for custom-painted billboards featuring popular musical artists of the time. Off-site signs, while part of the character of the Sunset Strip, have also inspired discussion in the community about the addition of new signs, desirable types of signs, and ways to

address any potential negative impacts of new or altered signs. The City is re-envisioning 21st century signage on the Sunset Strip to address changes within the off-site signage industry since Sunset Specific Plan (SSP) adoption in 1996.

In 2012, the City Council directed staff to develop a new process for review of off-site sign applications to better address a number of new signage requests. Staff reached out to residents, off-site signage operators and artists to identify a vision and new approach to off-site signage. The proposed policy consists of:

- Future vision for off-site signage that continues to enhance the Sunset Strip
- Guiding principles that direct implementation of the vision
- Detailed policies that regulate location, approval, construction, and operations for new and modified billboards

The proposed regulations would create a Sunset Strip Billboard District and permit improvements to existing signs as well as the phased addition of no more than 18 new signs over 15 years. New billboards will be integrated into new development and significant façade remodel projects via negotiated development agreements. The proposed regulations would allow limited improvements to the 89 existing billboards, and an overall limit of 20 digital signs (either new or modified) installed over the 15 year period. Proposed regulations for off-site signs include specific standards for size, lighting, community benefits, public art components, protection of public view sheds and vegetation.

This staff report describes the genesis of the project, community outreach, technical analysis, and the implementing policies and how they work. Exhibit A of this report includes the Draft Planning Commission Resolution and two attachments as follows:

- A) Draft Zoning Text Amendment strikeout language to relocate existing Sunset Off-Site Signage from the Zoning Ordinance in the SSP,
- B) Draft SSP replacement language for Part 2: Section 8 of the SSP including both new and existing language.

Additional exhibits to the staff report include the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration analyzing the project in relation to the environment and technical information related to the policy development.

Policy History

The Sunset Specific Plan was approved in in 1996, and included a chapter on the role of off-site signage on the Sunset Strip. Part Two, Section 8, (Billboards and Art Advertising) identified the cultural and economic significance of off-site advertising, and allowed for improvements to existing billboards, as well as new creative off-site advertising on the sides of buildings, (Tall Walls) and selected opportunities for new off-site signage. The SSP contained a provision that allowed for approval of off-site signs that did not meet the exact development standards set out in the SSP if the City found that the alternative proposal was consistent with the goals and policies in the SSP. Over time, numerous projects have come forward that addressed the intent of the SSP policy, but did not meet the exact regulations, and were approved via zone text amendments to allow alternative standards, and eventually applied different sign standards through

individual development agreements and the associated zone map amendments that place properties in the development agreement overlay zone.

As off-site advertising advanced with new technology and shifts in key advertisers, the SSP regulations became outdated, and the case-by-case approach was a necessary but less than ideal way to consider signage on the Sunset Strip. It became clear that the City should develop a revised vision with the policies to provide flexibility and creativity while addressing the City's desire to maintain the tradition of high quality, creative off-site advertising that promotes cultural relevance. The Sunset Strip is one of the top three most valuable locations for signage in the world, along with Times Square and Tokyo, providing a premier opportunity for creating a unique and valuable public space.

The City Council identified five goals to guide the details of the policy update, directing staff to revise the policy within this framework:

1. Creativity: Seek synergy with entertainment, culture and technology to create unique signs that exist only on Sunset.
2. Aesthetics: Integrate signage and structures into architecture and urban design.
3. Land Use: Prevent detrimental land-use practices dictated solely by signs
4. Technology: Incorporate and develop regulations for using 21st Century technology.
5. Quantity: Define the right amount of additional signage to support and enhance the iconic character of Sunset Boulevard.

Background Research

A team of staff, working closely with a team of land use and signage experts evaluated Sunset Boulevard from urban design, economic, and geographical perspectives. The consultant team was headed by Selbert Perkins, an international firm specializing in large scale urban design, graphics and signage, with team members from Standard Vision, an innovative architectural and digital media company, lighting designers Frances Krahe and Associates, and traffic experts from Fehr and Peers. Attachment E describes the analytic process that result in the vision for signage as a catalyst to re-invigorate the existing Strip.

Over the past few years, the project team conducted exploration, analysis and outreach to develop a nuanced approach that preserves and enhances an iconic public place. Work efforts included community meetings, discussions with outdoor advertising companies, property owners and industry experts. The team created an updated inventory of existing off-site signs (Exhibit A, Attachment B, Appendix), as well as analysis and comparisons of other places noted for creative off-site signage such as Times Square, Las Vegas and Tokyo. Additionally the team conducted an analysis of land uses on the Strip, including the financial impacts of signage on development; contemporary practices of the signage and advertising industry with the most current approach to light emission and the relationship of digital billboards to safe driving. The analysis also examined how the unique geography of Sunset Strip influences its urban design.

Economic analysis estimates that the current total value of all the signs on the Sunset Strip is approximately \$44.2 million per year. Based on analysis and conversations with both Sunset and industry stakeholders, the team determined that the City has the leverage and the desire to demand the highest quality for off-site signage on Sunset, and require associated public benefits to enhance the Strip and the community as a whole.

Vision

The team investigation of existing conditions, state of the art off-site advertising practices led to the vision for off-site signage that supports the arts, improves pedestrian orientation and enhances urban design. These statements describe the future Strip that embodies this vision:

- The 21st Century Strip remains iconic, attracting and welcoming visitors.
- Off-site signage energizes the Strip, enhancing urban design.
- Public art programming brings new visitors to the Strip.
- Cutting edge technology upgrades and enhances longstanding synergy of entertainment, advertising, historic resources, arts and music.
- Buildings with integrated billboards create a vibrant experience for all.
- Billboards are good neighbors, contributing positively to the excitement of the Strip without negative impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods.

Policy Development

As the team began to flesh out the vision with policy regulations, it became clear that change should be carefully calibrated but also accommodate the contemporary aspects of the off-site advertising industry to bring new creative energy to the Strip. Because the Strip is both a dynamic and iconic place, maintaining a high quality urban design presence is paramount. In seeking to implement the core project goals identified by the City Council, the team identified several key questions for the policy to resolve:

1. What are right types of new billboards?
2. What is the right number of new billboards?
3. How should new billboards be located- spread out, clustered, or both?
And on what types of properties?
4. How can the quality of existing signs be improved?

To honor urban design principles that allow for more creativity as well as control visual clutter by not adding to the plentiful stock of traditional billboards on poles, it was determined that the majority of new signs should be incorporated into buildings. Analysis of the existing buildings, potential for new development, and amount of underutilized land, revealed that the urban design balance should include both new buildings and remodels, limit quantity, and be phased over time. Based on typical building and financing cycles, the team determined that the policy should be cover 15 years. To address the appropriate balance between old and new, the team determined that the increment of new signage should not exceed an approximate 20% increase over the 89 sign faces that exist today. The resulting recommendation of no more than 18 additional signs that are architecturally integrated into buildings as new development or significant facade remodels supports valuable change without over-saturating the visual and economic environment.

Allowing for digital billboards adds important technological and creative flexibility to the Strip, but numbers should be limited and operations carefully regulated. As the Sunset Strip is a linear experience, it was determined that the opportunities for new billboard should be spread along the Strip, rather than clustered, although areas with key intersections or opportunities for public open space could benefit from a slightly higher concentration.

Urban Design Rationale

The policy provides opportunities to enhance signage for a range of property types including, historic properties, sites developed at maximum density, new development and all existing signs.

The proposed policy allocates new billboards to the Eastern and Western regions but preserves the low scale urban design of the Central region with no additional new billboards. As the key driver of creative technology, the policy permits a maximum overall number of 20 digital billboards, which can be achieved in three ways:

1. Incentive for designation and preservation of cultural resources with conversions of existing traditional billboards to digital on sites with designated cultural resources
2. Integrated major improvements to the exterior of buildings that are at, or above, maximum allowable density
3. A creative urban design component for new construction.

The existing urban typology separates the Strip into three distinct regions, West, Central and East, and identifies a series of billboard zones depicted below.

Figure 1: Regions and Billboard Zones

West:

The western section is the most typically urban portion of the Strip, defined by a east-west street grid. Billboards are clustered among buildings, and there are few public viewsheds, but the straight street allows billboards to be viewed from significant distances. The City is in the process of developing a pilot digital billboard on the City-owned site at 8755 Sunset. The proposed policy assumes approximately one half of new billboard projects here.

Central:

The central portion of the Strip is dominated by Sunset Plaza, a cluster of low rise retail buildings which are eligible for historic designation as a district. There are fewer existing billboards in this portion of the strip, which is celebrated in part for its uninterrupted views of the Los Angeles Basin to the south. No new billboards are proposed here, but conversions to digital on sites with designated resources are permitted.

East:

The eastern section of the Strip follows the ancient pathways of the native people along the base of the hills. The curving street creates both public view opportunities as well as high-quality viewing for off-site signage. In recent years several new developments with large scale billboards have been constructed in this area, and two digital billboards have been entitled at 8432 Sunset as part of the Sunset Time project at the former House of Blues site. The proposed policy assumes approximately one half of new billboard projects here.

Billboard Zones:

The Billboard Zones align approximately with the Geographic Areas of the existing SSP to identify 2-3 block zones that define the immediate visitor experience of each character area within the larger three regions. As the addition of digital signage requires thoughtful allocation to ensure that the digital signs do not develop in clusters, the Policy identifies a specific maximum of allocated digital opportunities per Billboard Zone, equaling 20 opportunities over 15 years. The draft policy is crafted to support digital billboards that face primarily east and west, so that the visual experience traveling in either direction would be a serial view of approximately 10 digital billboards allocated at 7 intervals along the 1.6 mile Strip. The policies are designed to be implemented over 15 years

The recommended numbers of projected new and digital signs reflect the greatest potential for change as required for environmental analysis. The following chart outlines the proposed maximum future scenario by type:

PROPOSED POLICY	Sign Faces	Type of Sign Face(s)
<i>Existing Signs</i>	89 *	74 Traditional Billboards 15 Tall Walls
<i>Signs In Progress**</i>	4	4 Digital Faces currently in process
<i>Maximum Potential New Signs</i> Integrated into new or remodeled buildings	18	17 Digital Faces 1 Traditional
<i>Potential 2032 TOTAL</i> Illustrates maximum potential for digital	111	71 Traditional Billboards 4 Digital Billboard faces that predate policy 3 Digital Billboards on Cultural Resource Sites 1 Traditional Billboard integrated into a new building or façade remodel 17 Digital Billboards integrated into a new building or façade remodel 15 Tall Walls

* This number does not include the 2 existing Video Art Signs or other signage that become legal non-conforming.
** Signs In Progress are 8755 Sunset, currently in design phase, and 8432 Sunset, which is entitled but not yet built.

PROPOSED POLICY

Guiding Principles

The 1996 Sunset Specific Plan integrates urban-design-focused development incentives with historic resources to support economic development and an iconic place. Rigorous analysis for the off-site signage policy developed guiding principles that build on the SSP vision, addressing the specific typography, historic character, design excellence, public art and evolving urban design patterns along the Sunset Strip. The guiding principles are detailed in *Section 2* of the draft *Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy* (Exhibit A, Attachment B).

Off-Site Signage Policy:

The proposed policy is a comprehensive set of regulations and guidelines organized into six categories. Each of these categories responds to the guiding principles and includes regulations and standards to address compatibility with the environment, neighborhood quality, and enhancement of the Sunset Strip experience. The following outlines each of the key categories.

- 1. New Signs:** The project team determined that the most effective way to meet the goals for invigorating the urban design is to require additional off-site signage to be integrated into building development, proposing a maximum of 18 new signs integrated into new development projects and significant façade remodels, sign limited to 1500 square feet per project.

Significant Facade Remodels: The team identified an opportunity to allow existing large buildings to upgrade and incorporate improvements to the public realm without adding additional density by permitting new signage with a significant facade remodel. Any existing buildings that integrate a new sign as part of a significant façade remodel must be at or above the maximum density allowed by the SSP. This allows properties that are used to their full potential but need improved aesthetics, branding or pedestrian orientations to add a new billboard in exchange for improved aesthetics and community benefits that add to the Strip's vibrancy. The land use analysis recognizes the potential for multiple sites to redevelop, and identifies approximately 22 sites at, or above, maximum density. In keeping with the limits on digital billboards only 7 significant facade remodels would be permitted opportunities for digital signage.

New Development: The policy requires that new development projects with integrated signs maximize the development potential of the property, addressing the topography and site conditions of Sunset with separate requirements for the north and south side of the Boulevard. New development applying for signage must be developed to at least 75 % of allowable density on the north side of the street and 90% of allowable density on the south side of the street. This concept addresses the concern about billboard projects limiting land use potential, because underutilized sites may only add a billboard if also providing the highest and best use of the property and contributing to the public realm. The policy proposes a maximum of 10 opportunities for digital signage as part of new construction.

Distribution: In keeping with the unique linear qualities of the Strip, the policy proposes that opportunities for new billboards be distributed along the denser, eclectic Eastern and Western regions, but that no *new* off-site signs should be allowed in the lower scale central section.

Integrated Design: Section A of the draft *Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy* (Exhibit A, Attachment B) outlines parameters to support high quality integration of billboards and architecture, including regulating the size and number of off-site signs per development project. The square footage of the project is a defining factor in the size of the sign, so that smaller projects have commensurately smaller signs. This approach supports development opportunities while discouraging land uses dictated by signage, providing opportunities for high quality synthesis of signage and architecture, and addressing the need for improvements to the public realm.

2. **Digital Signs:** Thoughtfully regulated, managed and allocated digital signage is a powerful urban design and financial tool. The studied 2032 policy scenario proposes up to 20 well-distributed digital billboards, including up to 17 new signs with a maximum of 1000 square feet in new development or significant façade remodels, and three conversions of existing traditional billboards on designated cultural resource sites. (Exhibit A, Attachment B, *Figure 2*).

Distribution: The proposed policy allocates digital signs in Billboard Zones 1-7, (Exhibit A, Attachment B, *Figure 2*). Thoughtful distribution of the digital signs along Sunset will create an experience punctuated by large scale public art, enhancing a visit to the Sunset Strip.

Incentives for Preservation of Cultural Resources: A recent City survey identified 109 potential cultural resources on the Sunset Strip. With constant development pressure and a dynamic popular culture preserving cultural resources on the Strip requires meaningful incentives. Conversion to a digital sign can function as a financial incentive for designation. The proposed policy would allow up to three designated cultural resources that have existing billboards to convert those signs to digital signage. The chart in Exhibit C lists the ten existing billboard sites that are eligible for designation and therefore conversion.

Lighting Regulations: Carefully controlled lighting is part of ensuring that signs are good neighbors. As noted in the technical studies, (Exhibit B, *Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration*, Appendices D and E) high contrast between emitted and ambient light is considered to be the light condition that most disturbs the human eye. The draft policy addresses light levels and contrast with detailed requirements and monitoring regulations for all billboard-related light emissions. Section 3.E of the draft *Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy* (Exhibit A, Attachment B) defines light measurements for both the surface of the sign and spillover light. In addition, the policy addresses the contrast between emitted light and ambient light, requiring an automatic sensor to control required light level reduction to prevent high contrast as ambient light levels shift in the evening and night hours. Exhibit B, Appendix D, *Memorandum from Frances Krahe and Associates*, provides additional technical information.

The light regulations proposed here are more restrictive than typical current regulations in other cities, and require lower light emissions and more gradual transitions than the current operations for the two Large Screen Video Signs on Sunset Boulevard. Consulting lighting designers addressed the human-eye response to contrast, recommending a comfortable viewing experience achieved with a relatively low maximum light level. The policy explicitly prohibits lighting impacts on adjacent residential properties. Fehr and Peers, a traffic consulting firm, prepared an update to their 2014 recommendations for regulating digital signage to address concerns regarding potential driver distraction, (Exhibit B, Appendix E). Their study finds that the proposed policy follows or exceeds best practices for controlling safe levels of contrast between emitted light and ambient light and implements multiple approaches to eliminating potential driver distraction. With detailed requirements that require ongoing monitoring and are tailored specifically for an urban area with high ambient light and relatively low traffic speeds, the policy provides a proactive approach to potential distractions.

Allowing regulated digital technology invites technological advancement while providing additional public art and design opportunities, support for cultural resources, and maximized benefit. The proposed regulations are crafted to avoid many of the potential downsides of typical digital billboards in other settings.

- 3. Modifications to Existing Signs:** The proposed policy increases flexibility for improvements to existing traditional billboards with additional modifications, such as allowing an overall maximum allowable size of 1200 square feet, backlit signs to reduce glare from floodlighting, and a one-time opportunity to be approved for additional height of up to 14 feet above the height limit on the parcel in order to clear a proven visual obstruction (such as a street tree). These modifications allow all existing off-site signs to maximize their value and improve the aesthetic quality. The policies expand opportunities to improve existing billboards and tall wall signs, allowing modifications for adjustments to height, size, and location in compliance with standards that protect identified SSP viewsheds and sightlines. Modifications to traditional billboards, except for conversion to digital technology on historic sites, may be approved at the staff level, provided all sight line, viewshed and light monitoring requirements are met.

Tall Walls: The proposed policy does not permit new Tall Walls but allows for existing Tall Walls to apply for modifications that re-allocate sign area on the building to address changed conditions or improved design. Modifications to Tall Walls require a development agreement.

- 4. Temporary Advertising Installations:** The proposed policy adds a new component to opportunities for temporary creative advertising. In addition to the existing opportunities for temporary creative signage and Tall Walls, the policy provides for a limited number of three dimensional Temporary Advertising Installations at ground level for 30 days, regardless of whether a property is fully developed or has existing off-site signs.
- 5. Public Art:** Realization of the Sunset Strip Billboard District is a critical component of the vision to create a 21st century synergy between off-site advertising and the cultural pulse of the region. The proposed City-operated District is the framework for Sunset Boulevard to expand its role as a large-scale

opportunity for connecting viewers to world class art in innovative and unexpected ways, creating an opportunity for internationally recognized and emerging artists to showcase a variety of digital and video art.

The District will be supported by an annual operation fee from each participating sign and will contract with qualified curators to coordinate arts programming and organize billboard arts events with oversight from the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission. Each new and modified off-site sign shall become part of the District. For traditional billboards, the policy requires art to be displayed a minimum of 96 hours (4 days or monetary equivalent) per year. For Digital Billboards, the policy requires 25% of the programming be dedicated to non-commercial art. The District is envisioned to engage visitors with public art throughout the day with exhibits on individual billboards, and a re-occurring event that coordinates programming for all the digital signs to display art at a pre-scheduled, promoted time, i.e., a "Sunset Moment". Once a critical mass of signs are operational, the City will host a semi-annual West Hollywood Billboard festival over several days, with coordinated arts programming, special events and awards.

6. **Development Agreements:** The proposed SSP amendment requires that all new and digital billboards and modified Tall Walls be approved via the development agreement process. These development agreement negotiations should be guided by the established Citywide community benefit priorities. Community members have expressed the desire for a portion of the community benefit funds to be applied to improvements on Sunset Boulevard such as improving pedestrian amenities and access to the hillside communities above the Strip. (Exhibit B, Section 5)
- *New Billboards integrated into Significant Façade Remodels* are required to provide significant on-site improvements to the pedestrian orientation and streetscape of Sunset Boulevard where possible, or provide a monetary developer contribution.
 - *New Billboards integrated into New Development* would be subject to appropriate requirements relating to the overall project benefits that prioritize on-site improvements to address the public realm.
 - *Digital Billboards* that convert from Traditional Billboards will provide, at a minimum, community benefits associated with improvements to Sunset Boulevard, operations of the Sunset Strip Billboard District, and monetary contributions relative to the anticipated value of the project.

SELECTION PROCESS

The City anticipates the industry demand for digital billboards to exceed the recommended 20 sites. Achieving the vision requires a thoughtful selection process tailored to the different categories of digital signs, and designed to attract the same high caliber of applicants that participated in the City's competition for the pilot digital billboard project. The selection processes below are based on draft policy guidelines

relating to each sign type. This report provides this outline framework for context as the Planning Commission is not requested to determine a process at this time. Staff will return to the Planning Commission and Council with a tailored selection process following adoption of the policy.

Digital Billboard Conversions: The project team proposes that this category could proceed on a first-come, first-served basis, permitting the first three sites that are designated as cultural resources move forward with conversion of a traditional billboard to digital, including compliance with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards, review by the Historic Preservation Commission, successful negotiation of a Development Agreement and approval by the City Council.

Digital Billboards as Part of Significant Façade Remodels: The policy identifies seven opportunities over the next 15 years for new digital billboards as part of significant façade remodels. During initial stakeholder discussion, staff discussed the possibility of a lottery process to allocate sign opportunities. Feedback led staff to explore the potential of a phased competition process to promote a high level of creativity in order to best implement the established policy goals. A phased competitive process would allow for an evaluation of the first phase of projects to be complete prior to proceeding with the next phase, allowing for community members to respond to actual installed projects.

Digital Billboards as Part of New Development Projects: The City is anticipating a comprehensive update to the SPP. Staff recommends that the appropriate process for determining approval and phasing of the 10 digital billboards allocated to new development be deferred to inclusion in the SSP framework. This ensures that new development projects with billboards align with the vision of the broader SSP update.

Existing Applications on File: The City received 21 applications for new billboards on or before September 2012. Seven of these applications were in process prior to that deadline and proceeded per the direction of the City Council. Fourteen projects remain, pending adoption of the policy update. All pending applications were offered the opportunity to withdraw application fees during the policy revision process. Following adoption of this policy by the Planning Commission and City Council, pending applicants may modify their projects to conform to the proposed new regulations. Qualified submitted applications will be considered prior to any new applications. As some of the proposed projects do not meet the draft policy vision it is unlikely that all pending applications will be modified to meet the drafted parameters.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

During the initial analysis phase, the project team conducted broad outreach to develop the policy framework goals and vision, including community meetings, discussions with outdoor advertising companies, property owners and industry experts. In general, community stakeholders were supportive of the potential for innovative signage on Sunset. Over the past months, the project team has held a second series of outreach meetings to discuss the draft policy language, meeting with property owners and billboard operators, community members, the Chamber of Commerce, Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission Art On The Outside Subcommittee, Planning Commission Long Range Planning Subcommittee,

Historic Preservation Commission, Sunset BID, WeHo Heights Neighborhood Association and holding an open community discussion. The project website at www.weho.org/sunsetsigns serves as a resource for the progress of the project.

Response from the business community has been largely positive, noting beneficial opportunities. Business stakeholders have concerns that initial concepts for a lottery selection process might not provide the City with the highest quality projects. Other stakeholders have focused on seeking a higher number of conversions and lighting standards that align with the higher light emission standards permitted in other areas of the country.

Residential community members expressed concerns related to the number of digital billboards, suggesting that a smaller number is preferable. Residents comment letters also requested that community benefits should be reinvested in the Sunset area. While expressing some concerns, the community supported the potential for high caliber art and architecture, but sought more information about how the policy would ensure the success of these concepts.

Arts stakeholders and community members also asked how the policy would ensure a meaningful high visibility platform for artists, requesting the commitment to remunerate artists and curators. The City is researching appropriate payment schedules for curation, and leasing and/or commissioning digital artwork.

To address comments, Staff made minor changes and clarifications to the draft policy circulated with the Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration. These include edits that clarify language, removal of the requirement that the three digital billboards on sites with cultural resources be limited by region so as to support the more eligible sites, and more restrictive digital lighting requirements to prevent confusion with traffic safety signage. These minor edits do not alter the environmental findings, or require recirculation of the environmental document. The language changes are included in the final draft in Exhibit A, Attachment B, and a chart detailing the sections with revisions is included in Exhibit C.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Initial Study determined that the proposed policy would not have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore, a Negative Declaration was prepared (Attachment B). The public comment period was from April 6 to April 27, 2017. The City received 22 comment letters which are addressed in Section 5 of the Final Initial Study/Negative Declaration, (Exhibit B).

NEXT STEPS

Planning Commission comments will be forwarded to the City Council for review. Once the City Council has approved the policy, staff will address the following related work items that support the achievement of the program and the vision:

- Develop final approval process for allocating digital opportunities, including analysis of the relative benefits of a competitive vs. random selection.

- Develop Sunset Strip Billboard District Operations specifics including schedule, vision and scope for arts events, a fee study, and recommendations for remuneration standards for artists and curators.

CONCLUSION

With the goal of continuing to attract and welcome residents and visitors to the Sunset Strip, the proposed Sunset Strip Off-Site Signage Policy encourages creativity, thoughtful use of digital technology, and opportunities for public art and urban design benefits for off-site signage proposals. The policy has been carefully researched and analyzed with a team of experts, and recommends a valid approach to meet the City's visions and goals for off-site signage. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission discuss the project, consider if additional changes to the policies should be recommended, and take the appropriate actions towards City Council review.

EXHIBITS

- A. Draft Resolution No. PC 17-1207
- B. Final Initial Study / Negative Declaration
- C. Chart of Edits
- D. Map: Eligible Cultural Resources Sites with Billboards
- E. Billboard Research and Analysis Summary

SUNSET BILLBOARD

Draft Design Principles



City of West Hollywood

Off-site advertising projects that meet or exceed the following principles are encouraged, and each will be reviewed for design features that demonstrate the intent of the following principles.

DESIGN QUALITY		
1.1 Design Excellence		
1	Off-site advertising signage that focuses on innovative media formatting thoughtfully integrated with excellent design	
2	Signage projects that utilize a unique design approach that contributes to the iconic nature of Sunset Boulevard	
3	Off-site advertising signage that is part of a cohesive design approach, bringing together signage with building architecture and high-quality pedestrian spaces or enhancements with the following design elements:	
4	Complementary design, style, and materials of signage and architecture	
5	Signage that complements existing signage where applicable, showing a seamless approach to all signage on site	
6	Off-site advertising signage must not hide or obscure the underlying uses, entrances, or open spaces of the building	
7	Usage of high-quality and durable materials	
1.2 Innovative Design		
1	Integrates with other building features such as architectural lighting elements, green walls, or other innovative design features	
2	Utilizes innovative billboard formats including curved or multi-planar surfaces or non-standard proportions	
3	Creatively uses the latest in technology to ensure digital image quality	
4	Uses innovative architectural features and materials	
1.3 Contextual & Compatible Design		
1	Enhances adjacent public spaces and the overall experience of pedestrians	
2	Is compatible with surrounding buildings and natural features	
3	Responds to topography and curves of the street	
4	Provides innovative opportunities for integrated public art	
5	Builds on and respects the historical and cultural identity and energy of the Strip	
6	Acts as a good neighbor to surrounding area by limiting light spill-over and visual intrusion	
7	Avoids and reduces the appearance of visual clutter	
8	Does not contribute to an over-concentration of digital signs compared to the distribution allocation in the Digital Billboard Distribution map	
ADAPTABLE & SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES		
2.1 Adaptability		
1	Creates signs with long lasting economic value through use of quality materials	
2	Envisions future technology and provides opportunity for upgrades	
3	Designed to evolve with future cultural and lifestyle trends	
2.2 Sustainable Practice		
1	Uses 100% clean energy and/or generate energy on-site	
2	Incorporates innovative sustainability features	
3	Addresses and further the City's intent for a sustainable development	
4	Uses durable, natural, and other sustainable materials	
LASTING VALUE		
3.1 Economic Development		
1	Increases value and visibility of off-site that attracts new viewers resonates with the City's creative identity	
2	Represents the potential for an iconic sign, based on the combination of design and location that is responsive to the creative identity of West Hollywood and the Sunset Strip	
3	Is part of a project that maximizes land use development potential, especially at the high-value locations on Sunset Boulevard	
4	Results in signage that is secondary to the land uses on the lot, unless certain limitations preclude other uses	
3.2 Community Benefits		
1	Provides public benefits, uses, or other features that address identified City priorities and community needs as part of Development Agreements and that meet the vision and intent of the policy	
2	Incentivizes the preservation of significant Cultural Resources through off-site signage revenue	
3	Complements and protects the character-defining features of Cultural Resources	
4	Furthers the City's vision for enhancing public art on the Sunset Strip	
TOTAL		

PROJECT CATEGORIES

The proposed Sunset Specific Plan Amendment provides for five categories off-site signage projects. All proposed signs in categories 1 – 4 below must undergo a design excellence review process, which will determine if the off-site sign application may move forward with a development agreement negotiation.

1) Conversion to digital billboard on a designated cultural resource site

- a. Allows for one existing static billboard face per eligible site to be replaced with a new digital billboard.
- b. Applicants must simultaneously apply for, or must have already received, a local cultural resource designation for the site.
- c. A finite pool of 4,000 square feet of digital sign area will be available for this project category.
- d. The total digital square footage per site is limited to replacement of the existing square footage, or a maximum of 1,000 square feet, whichever is the lesser amount.

2) New billboard as part of significant upgrades to an existing building:

This category identifies three types of building upgrades that may qualify for a new off-site sign, available for existing buildings that are at least 75% of the allowable building density on the subject site:

- a. Facade remodel of more than 50% of the exterior skin on façade(s) visible from Sunset Blvd.
- b. Significant seismic upgrade.
- c. Other upgrades of at least 25% of currently assessed building value.

3) New billboard as part of new development

- a. A new development project of at least 75% of the allowable building density on the subject site may apply for an off-site signage that conforms to the criteria of the policy.

4) New alternative projects

Projects that do not fit the above categories may be considered for Development Agreement if they meet the design excellence scoring criteria and provide outstanding community benefits.

5) Upgrades to existing billboards and tall wall signs

The proposed Sunset Specific Plan Amendment encourages upgrades to existing signs, including relocation on site, change in height/angle, backlighting, or increase in size up to 20' x 60'.

**ATTACHMENT L – Inventory of Outdoor Advertising Signs On Sunset Blvd.
can be found by clicking the following link:**

<https://app.box.com/v/sunsetbillboardpolicy>

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FROM THE PUBLIC

Written Communication from the Public

Bryan Eck

From: Nancy Dushkin <ndushkin@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 11:17 AM
To: Bryan Eck
Subject: Re: Policy Revisions for Off-Site Advertising Signage and Billboards on Sunset Boulevard - City Council March 18, 2019

More and more, those of us that live off the Sunset strip find ourselves in an area that is becoming less and less desirable. I believe zone 3 includes the ONLY portion of the strip that has residents with a direct view of Sunset just one block up Horn and the surrounding block, yet you plan 3 new DIGITAL billboards (if I read this correctly). It's bad enough that the 7-story electronic billboard is being built there in direct view of residents, now you want to put more? If my reading of the map is correct, I feel the only thing I can do is to move quickly out of West Hollywood. Our city council and planning commissions seem to care nothing about the residents.

I don't expect you to really care, as the focus is on money, not people, but thought I would voice my opinion as a current home owner in the area.

Nancy Dushkin
8788 Shoreham Dr.
West Hollywood

On Thu, Feb 28, 2019 at 10:40 AM Bryan Eck <BEck@weho.org> wrote:

Good Morning,

The West Hollywood City Council will hold a public hearing on March 18, 2019 on a proposed update to the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Advertising Signage Policy. In advance of that hearing, the documents for this update have been included in the City Council agenda for March 4, 2019 to allow additional time for review; however the item will not be discussed at the meeting on March 4.

The Draft Sunset Boulevard Signage Policy can be found here:

[2019 Draft Sunset Boulevard Signage Policy](#)

You can also access additional on the project website:

[Project Website - Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Advertising Signage Policy](#)

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments. Thank you for your continued interest and input on the future of off-site advertising signage on Sunset Boulevard.

Written Communication from the Public

Bryan Eck

Senior Planner

Planning and Development Services Department

City of West Hollywood

8300 Santa Monica Blvd.

West Hollywood CA 90069

T: 323.848.6858



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Memo

To: Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Manager, and City Attorney
From: Alyssa T. Poblador, Administrative Specialist IV *ATP*
CC: J. KEHO, B. SIEGL, B. ECK, S. LEJEUNE
Date: March 4, 2019
Re: Correspondence Concerning Item 2.G. on the 3/4/19 Agenda

Attached please find correspondence received relating to Item 2.G. on the March 4, 2019 Council Agenda.

2.G. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Written Communication from the Public

Alyssa Poblador

From: Yvonne Quarker
Sent: Monday, March 04, 2019 7:18 AM
To: Alyssa Poblador
Subject: FW: Allocation for Public Art in the Zone Text Amendment and Sunset Specific Plan Amendment to Modify Standards for Off-Site Signage in the Sunset Specific Plan Area

From: Jessica Rich <jeccaree@gmail.com>
Date: March 3, 2019 at 11:57:35 PM PST
To: <jduran@weho.org>, <jdamico@weho.org>, <jheilman@weho.org>, "Lindsey Horvath" <lhovath@weho.org>, <lmeister@weho.org>, <council@weho.org>
Cc: Rebecca Ehemann <rehemann@weho.org>, Andrew Campbell <ACampbell@weho.org>
Subject: Allocation for Public Art in the Zone Text Amendment and Sunset Specific Plan Amendment to Modify Standards for Off-Site Signage in the Sunset Specific Plan Area

Dear Mayor Duran, Mayor Pro Tempore D'Amico; and Honorable Councilmembers;

My name is Jessica Rich. I am the Curator for the public art percentage on the two digital billboards located at 8410 and 9039 Sunset Boulevard, in your esteemed City.

I am writing to urge you to maintain the proposed 25% allocation for public art in the Zone Text Amendment and Sunset Specific Plan Amendment to Modify Standards for Off-Site Signage in the Sunset Specific Plan Area. Originally this inspired piece of legislation included a sensible 25% (15 minutes per hour) allocation of time for public art. In the most recent draft that allocation has been reduced to 17.5% (10.5 minutes per hour). Right now, on both digital billboards, the allocation for public art is 23% (13.8 minutes per hour).

Why would you significantly reduce the allocation of time for public art on new digital billboards? Sign operators are promoting disinformation that surrendered public art time can be 'repurchased' by the City whenever it chooses. This forfeited time will never be made available to the City nor within the City's financial means. Once you cede this time it will forever be lost to advertising.

25% per hour, allocated to public art, is a fair amount. It is substantive enough to attract artists of all career levels, but most of all it is an amount that allows a meaningful narrative to develop and gives an artist creative latitude to produce work that inspires and provokes dialogue. Anything less than 25% is little more than a screen saver.

Less public art is not a public benefit. Less public art is called blight. Less public art does not promote cultural equity or become an agent of change. Do the right thing for your Creative City. Advocate for art, and the money will follow.

Thank you for your time and attention,

All the best,

Written Communication from the Public

Jessica Rich

Memo

To: Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Manager, and City Attorney
From: Alyssa T. Poblador, Administrative Specialist IV *ATP*
CC: J. KEHO, B. SIEGL, B. ECK, S. LEJEUNE
Date: February 28, 2019
Re: Correspondence Concerning Item 2.G. on the 3/4/19 Agenda

Attached please find correspondence received relating to Item 2.G. on the March 4, 2019 Council Agenda.

2.G. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Written Communication from the Public

Alyssa Poblador

From: Yvonne Quarker
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 11:29 AM
To: Alyssa Poblador
Subject: FW: 2.G.ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

From: Martin Gantman <Martin@Gantman.com>
Date: February 28, 2019 at 11:05:27 AM PST
To: <lhovath@weho.org>, <jheilman@weho.org>, 'Lauren Meister' <LMeister@weho.org>, <jduran@weho.org>
Cc: 'Elyse Eisenberg' <elyse.eisenberg@gmail.com>, 'West Hollywood North NA' <arkoffman@hotmail.com>, 'Andrew Campbell' <acampbell@weho.org>
Subject: 2.G. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

Dear Councilmembers:

I would like to weigh in on a few of the items in the proposed Sunset Billboard Policy that is on the City's coming agenda. The following are items that I hope you will pay extra attention to:

1. Attachment 2G, Item B (Operation Standards): The refresh rate, in addition to the explanation in the Draft, is unfortunately also the rate at which a human's eye and attention is distracted from what they are doing by a sudden change in bright light – similar to a flash bulb. Can one live with a flash bulb going off in front of their home every 8 seconds? I can see 2 of the digital billboards on the Beverly Center from my bedroom window. My home is relatively far away from that building, but if I am looking out my window, even casually, my eye and attention are distracted by the refresh rate on those signs. I think this refresh rate should not be changed from 16 seconds, particularly in the evening when people are trying to sleep.

2. Attachment 2G, Item D (Next Steps): I think the review panel "Generalist" member should be dedicated to a City Resident, not a Business Owner. The panel already includes a billboard professionally, and a business owner is likely to side in that direction. I think the issues of the residential neighborhood should always be included on the panel.

3. Attachment D, Item 3A: (Public Benefit) I would hope that the City can find some way to monetize these billboards and receive a portion of the millions of dollars per year that will be made by these developers. I know that a development agreement is mentioned in the proposal, but it is very vague as to how the development agreements will actually attend to the City's benefit.

4. Attachment D, Item 3E: As a member of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission, I am very surprised that the programming time for arts related projects would be reduced from 25% to 17.5%. This is a reduction in public benefit, and given how anxious developers are to create digital billboards, I don't understand why this carrot is being offered.

5. Attachment D, Item 5D: Since I am not knowledgeable about lighting science, this is more of a question. Does illuminance in this case mean the amount of light that is ON a residential building, or is it the amount of light that a resident would see from their property line. I am concerned here with whether the amount of light that is seen from one's window is being reduced sufficiently, or are we just talking about the amount of light cast on the walls of their home?

Written Communication from the Public

In addition, I was personally told by a member of the City Planning staff that the amount of light coming off of the digital billboards on the Beverly Center was a good example of low light. If so, I would hate to see what a normal level is.

Billboard developers take an extraordinary amount of income from these billboards over many years, and I personally think that the City does not have to offer many giveaways in order to accomplish what the City desires for the Sunset Strip.

Thank you very much for taking a moment to pay attention to these issues.

Martin Gantman
Resident
Arts Commissioner

Memo

To: Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Manager, and City Attorney
From: Yvonne Quarker, City Clerk *YQ*
CC: J. KEHO, B. SIEGL, B. ECK, S. LEJEUNE
Date: March 18, 2019
Re: Correspondence Concerning Item 3.A. on the 3/18/19 Agenda

Attached please find correspondence received relating to Item 3.A. on the March 18, 2019 Council Agenda.

3.A. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Yvonne Quarker

Subject: FW: Offsite Signage Policy agenda 3.A.
Attachments: Offsite signage letter 3.14.pdf; ATT00001.htm

From: Genevieve Morrill <gmorrill@wehochamber.com>
Date: March 18, 2019 at 11:54:26 AM PDT
To: "council@weho.org" <council@weho.org>
Cc: Paul Arevalo <Parevalo@weho.org>, "Nick Rimedio (Nick.Rimedio@lapeerhotel.com)" <Nick.Rimedio@lapeerhotel.com>, "Lawson, Layne (LayneLawson@clearchannel.com)" <LayneLawson@clearchannel.com>, "Sarah Lejeune" <SLejeune@weho.org>, Bianca Siegl <BSiegl@weho.org>, "jduran@weho.org" <jduran@weho.org>, "jdamico@weho.org" <jdamico@weho.org>, John Heilman <JHeilman@weho.org>, "lmeister@weho.org" <lmeister@weho.org>, "lhorvath@weho.org" <lhorvath@weho.org>, Maribel Louie <MLouie@weho.org>
Subject: Offsite Signage Policy agenda 3.A.

Dear Mayor and Council,

As you are aware, we have had an active Billboard Committee since April of 2017. This committee has been working with City staff to support a policy that will meet the objectives of the city but also not be detrimental to these businesses. Throughout this process, staff has listened and addressed many of our concerns and made adjustments. We thank the staff for their hard work and we hope that we can continue to find compromise that will still be considered a winning policy for all intended. We support the policy with a few recommendations for your consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the attached proposal.

Best

Gen

Genevieve Morrill
President and CEO
West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
8272 Santa Monica Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90046
Tel. 323-650-2688 Fax. 323-650-2689
Pronouns "her" and "she"
gmorrill@wehochamber.com
www.wehochamber.com
Facebook - www.facebook.com/wehochamber
Twitter - @wehochamber

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March 18, 2019

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
City of West Hollywood
8300 Santa Monica Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90069

RE: Agenda 3.A. Offsite Signage Policy

Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

We are writing to you to voice our support of Agenda Item 3.A on tonight's agenda, the proposed new Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy. We appreciate the City's extensive work on ensuring that Sunset Strip remains at the forefront of innovation. While we support the Policy overall, we do have some suggest adjustments and direction that we feel would provide for a level playing field and would benefit all stakeholders.

This Chambers Billboard Committee recommends the following suggestions:

Arts Program

17.5% (64 Days) reduced to 15% (55 Days)

Programming language to be consistent with the following:

At least an average of six and a half minutes of display time per hour for a total of 130 minutes of display timer per day on the sign structures shall be devoted to arts programming which may include but is not limited to digital media, film, animation, still pictures, video art events, live or computer-generated feeds, or other types of programming as approved by the Commission. Up to 4 minutes per hour of the city art allocation may be used for community and public service announcements, city announcements and advertisements for upcoming arts and cultural programming and events, as reviewed and approved by the city of West Hollywood's Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission.

- This represents 9%
- The other 6% could be used on special days or events as presented by staff

Additional Items:

- Development Agreement Process:

8272 Santa Monica Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90046
Tel: 323-650-2688 / Fax: 323-650-2689
www.wehochamber.com

- We would recommend that the development agreement process would include multiple appraisers when evaluating the revenue for any new or converted digital signs.
- When calculating a development agreement fee for a conversion, we recommend that the fee is based on the revenue lift instead of the entire revenue amount since converted signs have an existing a revenue stream.
- Scoring System
 - We would recommend that City Council be part of the process, in some form, before the scoring system is finalized.

We appreciate the City Council's review and consideration of our suggestions and respectfully request that staff be directed to take them into consideration when moving forward. We look forward to the city implementing the new Sunset Strip Sign Policy and are excited that the City of West Hollywood is open to developing new creative signage that reflects the 21st century. This new policy will not only benefit our interested businesses and industry partners who operate in West Hollywood but will benefit the entire West Hollywood Community.

Sincerely,



Genevieve Morrill
President and CEO

Cc: Paul Arevalo, City Manager
Nick Rimedio, WHCC Chair
Bianca Siegl, Long Range Planning Manager
Sarah Lejeune, Contract Planner -Long Range Planning
WHCC Billboard Committee members

8272 Santa Monica Blvd.
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Yvonne Quarker

From: David Rabinek <david@veniceinvestments.com>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 3:57 PM
To: Yvonne Quarker
Cc: Joseph Emrani; Youdi Emrani; David Emrani
Subject: West Hollywood City Council Meeting - 03-18-2019

Ms. Yvonne Quarker, City Clerk
City of West Hollywood

Dear Ms. Quarker:

Sunset Place Holdings, LLC and Sunset Park Holdings, LLC are substantial owners of real property on the "Sunset Strip" located within the City of West Hollywood. We have reviewed the Staff's Report for the

**SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS
FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA.**

Please inform the members of the City Council that we support the Staff's Report for off-site signage in the Sunset Specific Plan Area.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

DAVID BERNARD RABINEK
General Counsel
VENICE INVESTMENTS
SUNSET PLACE HOLDINGS, LLC
SUNSET PARK HOLDINGS, LLC
1526 S. Broadway
Los Angeles, CA. 90015
Tele: 213.747.5588 ext. 295
Fax: 213.747.5599
Email: david@veniceinvestments.com

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Memo

To: Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Manager, and City Attorney
From: Yvonne Quarker, City Clerk *YQ*.
CC: J. KEHO, B. SIEGL, B. ECK, S. LEJEUNE
Date: March 18, 2019
Re: Correspondence Concerning Item 3.A. on the 3/18/19 Agenda

Attached please find correspondence received relating to Item 3.A. on the March 18, 2019 Council Agenda.

3.A. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Yvonne Quarker

Subject: FW: Big Outdoor Letter of Support RE SSP Amendments
Attachments: Big Outdoor Support Letter SSP Amendments 031819.pdf

From: Erin Watkins [<mailto:erin@bigoutdoor.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 9:43 AM
To: Bryan Eck
Cc: Paul Arevalo; John Keho
Subject: Big Outdoor Letter of Support RE SSP Amendments

Mr. Eck –

Please find attached correspondence in support of the currently proposed ordinance modifying the Sunset Specific Plan and Zoning Ordinance related to off-site advertising that is scheduled to be heard and considered in tonight's City Council meeting.

Thank you,
Erin Watkins

BIGOUTDOOR

ERIN WATKINS
GENERAL COUNSEL
1528 Slocum Street, Dallas, TX 75207
o. (214) 919-2535 e. erin@bigoutdoor.com
m. (214) 356-8246 w. www.bigoutdoor.com
NY | LA | DAL | CHI | SF | BOS | SD | PDX | ATX | ATL | PHL

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March 18, 2019

Mr. Bryan Eck, Senior Planner
City of West Hollywood
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90069

Via E-Mail at BEck@weho.org

RE: Zone Text Amendment and Sunset Specific Plan Amendment to Modify Standards for Off-Site Signage in the Sunset Specific Plan Area

Dear Mr. Eck:

Our company, Big Outdoor, operates several off-site signs located in the Sunset Specific Plan Area, and we have recently opened a new satellite office within the area as well. I am writing today to express our support for the currently proposed ordinance approving the amendment of Municipal Code Title 19, Zoning Ordinance and a Sunset Specific Plan amendment to modify standards and policies for off-site signage in the Sunset Specific Plan Area.

We appreciate all the time and efforts of the City Staff and Council in crafting a policy that will ensure that off-site signage may continue to add to the vibrancy of the City of West Hollywood.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (214) 919-2535 or erin@bigoutdoor.com.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin Watkins".

Erin Watkins
General Counsel

CC: Paul Arevalo (*via email at PArevalo@weho.org*)
John Kehe (*via email at JKehe@weho.org*)

Big Outdoor
1528 Slocum Street
Dallas, Texas 75207

Memo

To: Mayor, City Councilmembers, City Manager, and City Attorney
From: Yvonne Quarker, City Clerk *yq*
CC: J. KEHO, B. SIEGL, B. ECK, S. LEJEUNE
Date: March 14, 2019
Re: Correspondence Concerning Item 3.A. on the 3/18/19 Agenda

Attached please find correspondence received relating to Item 3.A. on the March 18, 2019 Council Agenda.

3.A. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT AND SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT TO MODIFY STANDARDS FOR OFF-SITE SIGNAGE IN THE SUNSET SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Subject: FW: Art allocation for Sunset Billboards

From: Martin Gantman <Martin@Gantman.com>
Date: March 14, 2019 at 10:29:56 AM PDT
To: 'Lauren Meister' <LMeister@weho.org>, <jheilman@weho.org>, <jduran@weho.org>, 'Lindsey Horvath' <LHorvath@weho.org>
Cc: 'Andrew Campbell' <acampbell@weho.org>, 'Rebecca Ehemann' <rehemann@weho.org>
Subject: Art allocation for Sunset Billboards

Dear Councilmembers:

As the hearing for the Sunset Boulevard amendment is on schedule for next Monday, I just want to remind you of my feeling that the allocation for art space on the billboards should NOT be reduced to 17.5%, but should at least be retained at its current 23%, if not increased to 25%.

The billboard companies make plenty, and we should not succumb to their desire for more profits to the detriment of our public programs and dedication to creativity. I have no doubt that maintaining our current time allotment is not a deal breaker for these companies.

In addition, it is certainly not a Public Benefit, as stated in the draft, to REDUCE the time allotment for the arts. It is important that we maintain our City's dedication to being different, to standing out, as a voice for its community and as a bellwether for other communities demonstrating that social benefits can be attained within the commercial structure of an urban setting.

Please resist the change that the billboard companies are demanding.

Thank you very much, and accept my apologies for multiple mailings on this issue.

Best regards,

Martin Gantman