

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 11-1705

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to express my urgent concern about two efforts by the City to erect thousands of new, ugly, and dangerous digital billboards in every neighborhood of Los Angeles. The first is the PLUM Committee's proposed changes to the Citywide Sign Ordinance (Council File 11-1705), which would allow for 180 new digital billboards to be erected in loosely defined commercial zones and on city-owned property. This is an intolerable intrusion on the safety and aesthetics of our streets. The second is the current Public Works Dept project - Sidewalk and Transit Amenities Program (STAP) - that envisions 3,000 new bus shelters each with a 4 x 6-foot digital screens flashing ads every 8 seconds and lifting personal data from cell phones. According to data from the Department of Water and Power, each billboard uses 11 times as much power as the average household, and studies show digital billboards distract drivers and contribute to accidents. A 2017 study in Florida found a 29% higher accident rate on highways near digital billboards. Your first job is to protect residents, and both of these efforts do the opposite. I urge you to think about residents first and....

1. Make the Public Works Department Keep its Promise: StreetsLA staff told residents that any new digital billboard would require a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that considers aesthetics, power usage, and traffic safety.
2. Take Down All Illegal Billboards First: The same companies now asking you for digital billboards also operate the nearly 1600 billboards in LA that are non-compliant with their building permits. No digital billboards should be allowed until all their illegal billboards have been removed.
3. Stop Ignoring Vision Zero: It has been shown that more flashing signs, whether overhead or on bus stops, leads to driver distraction which equals more dangerous roadways, traffic accidents, and pedestrian deaths. The Public Works Dept. never considered an ad-free bus shelter, but the coming financial assistance from the Federal Government and the state budget surplus gives us the opportunity to re-think that error. This is the moment to create a distinctive and beautiful streetscape in Los Angeles, in time for the arrival of the Olympic Games and the World Cup. The planned billboard schemes that are now pending would take our city down the wrong path. We urge you to be part of the solution in keeping neighborhoods safe, beautiful, and sustainable. Thank you, Greg

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