

Public Comments Not Uploaded PLUM CONCERNS -- 5/31/22 MEETING: COMMENTS RE Westwood cabinet sign ban

1 message

'JEFF ARAN' via Clerk-PLUM-Committee <clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org>
Reply-To: clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

Sun, May 29, 2022 at 9:46 AM

We are resubmitting our concerns on this item. Please kindly forward to the PLUM Committee members.

Thank you,

Jeff Aran
Legal Counsel
California Sign Assn.
www.calsign.org

LAW OFFICES OF JEFFREY L. ARAN
POB 22833
Sacramento, CA 95822
916.395.6000

-----Original Message-----

From: JEFF ARAN <jaranatty@aol.com>
To: zuriel.espinosa@lacity.org <zuriel.espinosa@lacity.org>
Sent: Wed, Feb 9, 2022 6:56 pm
Subject: COMMENTS: Re: Westwood Village Specific Plan Amendment Updates - CPC 2/10/22

Following up on our phone call, please see attached letter.

Thank you,

JEFF ARAN
jeff@calsign.org
CALIFORNIA SIGN ASSOCIATION
916-395-6000

 **CSA Westwood letter.docx**
505K

February 9, 2022

Zuriel Espinosa
City Planning Associate
Los Angeles City Planning
200 N. Spring St., Room 667
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 978-1249

RE: Proposed Ban on Cabinet Signs in Westwood Village SPA

Dear Mr. Espinosa:

Following up on our call Monday, the California Sign Association is significantly concerned about the proposed ban on cabinet signs within the Westwood Specific Plan. We urge the city to rethink an outright ban, and instead adopt reasonable design guidelines to accomplish the SPA objectives without eliminating a traditional sign type.

Since its founding in 1959, the California Sign Association has supported reasonable on-premise sign regulation and been dedicated to the evolving needs of the signage and visual communications industry. CSA is an association of professionals representing manufacturers, suppliers, consumers, businesses and other users of signage and visual communication media. Many of our members' customers own and operate businesses in Westwood. (CSA is not the billboard industry.)

Under the existing ordinance, Cabinet Signs are defined as:

Cabinet Sign – A wall sign with text, logos, or symbols that are placed on the face of an enclosed cabinet/box attached to a building. The face may be illuminated internally or externally.

Our cursory Google review of signs throughout the Westwood SPA reveals numerous cabinet signs. This proposal would make all these signs nonconforming, for sure, but also leaves no practical accommodation for cabinet signs when no other sign type is feasible. It also fails to take into account unique design elements, as well as the effect on logos and trademarks.

As discussed, cabinet signs are frequently not found in the shape of a box or rectangle. For example, the images below (not all within Westwood) might be deemed cabinet signs or include cabinet sign elements under the definition.



Wells Fargo's sign is technically a cabinet sign, but we don't think the city intends to prohibit such unique dimensional signs with raised lettering and logo.



Here's another sample of a sign that incorporates both channel letters and a cabinet.



The Bella Pita sign in Westwood is a cabinet sign. While this may be the type of sign the city would seek to eventually eliminate, constraints of the building façade, parapet wall, brick facing, spacing, electrical considerations etc., may make it the only sign type feasible for this location. In addition, in retail strip centers or commercial corridors with a unified look, a mishmash of cabinet signs and channel letter-only signs can create the unintended appearance of poor maintenance and design, i.e., the opposite effect results.



Additionally, we haven't read any rationale or governmental purpose for eliminating cabinet signs (aesthetics alone is insufficient) and it's not clear what the intention is with regard to existing cabinet signs. Will the prohibition require their removal? If so, the city would be required to pay just compensation.

Here's an example of a sign shaped like a box but made with individual letters attached to underlying box frame or raceway, which contains the electronics. Would this sign design be banned?



Here's an example of a cabinet sign with routed push-thru letters illuminated from within. Is this sign type potentially prohibited? Obviously, the city is not intending to squelch creative signage, but the definition of cabinets signs as applied in this circumstance is problematic.



Please note that pursuant to Business & Professions Code §5491 the city may be required to conduct an inventory of illegal and abandoned signs before implementing new sign restrictions unless the rule applies only to new construction.

Also, from a construction standpoint, often a cabinet sign is necessary where there is no access to install channel letters or other signage. At the very least there should be provision for allowing cabinet signs when other styles are not feasible. For example, there are historic and other buildings, in particular older retail centers, where multiple holes cannot be drilled through the façade or there is not a reasonably accessible electric connection. There may also be installation and design limitations imposed by a lease or shopping center signage criteria.

We urge the city to develop preference guidelines in lieu of an outright ban and look forward to further dialogue with you on this.

Thank you,

JEFF ARAN, Esq.

Government Affairs Director

California Sign Association

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