



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Date: July 22, 2010\*  
Time: After 8:30 a.m.  
Place: Van Nuys City Hall  
14410 Sylvan St., Council Chamber 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Public Hearing: Required

Case No.: CPC-2007-5866-SN  
CEQA No.: ENV-2003-1377-MND  
(REC1)  
Related Cases: CPC-2002-4173-SUD  
ENV-2003-1377-MND  
Council No.: 4, 5, 13  
Plan Area: Hollywood  
Certified NC: Hollywood United, Central  
Hollywood, Hollywood  
Studio District  
GPLU: Various  
Zone: Various

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Designated commercial and industrially zoned properties roughly bounded by the Hollywood Freeway (101 Freeway) on the north and east, Melrose Avenue on the South, and La Brea Boulevard on the west.

**PROPOSED PROJECT:** An amendment of the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District proposing changes to regulations to prohibit certain signage and proposing changes to regulations governing the size, location, and density of certain signage within the District boundaries.

**APPLICANT:** City of Los Angeles


**REQUESTED ACTIONS:**

1. **Approve** the Final Draft Ordinance as transmitted by the City Attorney and **recommend** that the City Council adopt the requested Amendments to the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District, pursuant to City Charter Section 558 B.3
2. **Find** that Mitigated Negative Declaration ENV-2003-1377-MND (REC1) is adequate environmental clearance for this action.

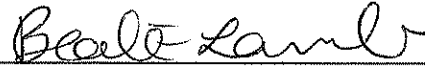
**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

1. **Approve** the Final Draft Ordinance as transmitted by the City Attorney and **recommend** that the City Council adopt the requested Amendments to the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District, pursuant to City Charter Section 558 B.3
2. **Find** that Mitigated Negative Declaration ENV-2003-1377-MND (REC1) is adequate environmental clearance for this action.
3. **Adopt** the attached Findings.

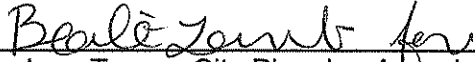
S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP  
Director of Planning



Kevin Keller, AICP, Senior City Planner



Blake E. Lamb, AICP, City Planner  
Telephone: 213-978-1178



Jordann Turner, City Planning Associate  
213-978-1379

**ADVICE TO PUBLIC:** \*The exact time this report will be considered during the meeting is uncertain since there may be several other items on the agenda. Written communications may be mailed to the *Commission Secretariat, Room 272, City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012* (Phone No. 213-978-1300). While all written communications are given to the Commission for consideration, the initial packets are sent to the week prior to the Commission's meeting date. If you challenge these agenda items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing agendized herein; or in written correspondence on these matters delivered to this agency at or prior to the public hearing. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to this programs, services and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or other services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request not later than three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by calling the Commission Secretariat at (213) 978-1300.

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- CEQA Findings
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**Exhibits:**

- A. City Attorney Transmittal, Final Draft Ordinance
- B. City Council Motion (CF 07-2858-S1)
- C. Environmental Clearance (ENV-2003-177-MND(REC1))
- D. Original City Planning Commission Determination (CPC-20007-5866-SN) dated January 8, 2009
- E. Sign Dictionary
- F. November 12, 2008 Public Hearing Testimony and Communications for CPC-20007-5866-SN
- G. Map of Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District Boundaries

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### PROJECT SUMMARY

On July 13, 2010, the City Council adopted a motion (CF 07-2858-S1)(Exhibit B) amending the City Council's March 3, 2009 action by directing the City Attorney to amend the City Planning Commission (CPC) approved revised Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District (Exhibit D) to include the elimination of supergraphics and related programs. The initial revisions to the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District were adopted by the City Planning Commission on January 8, 2009. On February 24, 2009, the Planning and Land Use Management Committee considered the City Planning Commission report and draft Ordinance (substantially as approved by the CPC) and recommended approval to the full City Council. On March 3, 2009, the City Council requested the City Attorney to prepare and present the final draft Ordinance based upon the City Planning Commission's action for final Council consideration.

Pursuant to the adopted July 13, 2010 motion, the City Attorney has drafted and transmitted an ordinance (Exhibit A) further amending the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District (SUD). In summary, the ordinance proposes to prohibit supergraphics, eliminate the Sign Reduction Program associated with the construction of supergraphics, and prohibit Electronic Message Displays (Digital Displays) as Wall Signs. Also included are additional technical and procedural corrections.

Pursuant to Charter Section 558, staff recommends approval of this final draft ordinance as modified.

### PRIOR/CURRENT RELEVANT CASES

**CPC-2002-4173-SUD:** Established the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District, effective October 21, 2003.

**CPC-2007-5866-SN:** Original amendments to the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District approved by the City Planning Commission on January 8, 2009 (Exhibit D).

### HOLLYWOOD SUD BACKGROUND

The Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District (SUD) was adopted in October 2003 (Ordinance 176172). The Hollywood SUD contains regulations for sign development for commercial and industrial properties within the boundaries of the district. The current ordinance includes regulations regarding the size and density of permitted signage; and includes regulations permitting supergraphics and solid panel rooftop signs in return for the reduction of existing off-site advertising signs (billboards and pole signs) in other locations within the Hollywood Community Plan Area.

On and off-site signage has become an important factor in the economics of developing major commercial and entertainment facilities in the Hollywood community. Unique sign programs were developed by the project developers and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to permit off-site advertising on various sign structures through the use of special legislation exempting these projects from Municipal Code sign regulations and the CRA's Design for Development. The purpose of the Hollywood Signage SUD was to help make it possible for developers to utilize advertising revenue for future projects without having to enter into special agreements for each individual project. The goal of the Ordinance was to acknowledge and promote the continuing contribution of signage to the distinctive aesthetic of Hollywood while managing and controlling blight created by poorly placed, badly designed signs.

In November 2007 the City Council adopted a motion instructing the Department of City Planning (DCP), along with the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), to amend the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District (SUD) to address the issue of supergraphic signage, including temporary special displays, and to further address issues and ensure consistency between the Hollywood Signage SUD and the CRA Design for Development for Signs in Hollywood.

Department of City Planning Staff began the process of amending the Hollywood SUD in order to review standards for the location, amount, orientation, lighting, design, quality of construction, and other physical characteristics of signage to ensure that signage continued to enhance development and make a positive contribution in Hollywood.

Between November 2007 and November 2008, DCP and CRA staffs held number meetings with City Departments, sign industry representatives, neighborhood councils, homeowners' associations, business owners, and other Hollywood stakeholders. On November 12, 2008 a public hearing was conducted for the amended ordinance (see Exhibit F for public hearing testimony and written communications). The result of this effort was the approval of the original revisions to the Hollywood SUD by the City Planning Commission on January 9, 2009 (Exhibit D).

#### **CITY ATTORNEY TRANSMITTAL**

The initial revisions to the Hollywood SUD were adopted by the City Planning Commission on January 8, 2009. On February 24, 2009, the Planning and Land Use Management Committee considered the City Planning Commission report and draft Ordinance (substantially as approved by the CPC) and recommended approval to the full City Council. On March 3, 2009, the City Council requested the City Attorney to prepare and present the final draft Ordinance for Council consideration. The proposed ordinance, as originally drafted, would continue to permit supergraphic signs within the sign district boundaries.

On July 13, 2010, the City Council adopted a motion (CF 07-2858-S1)(Exhibit B) amending the City Council's March 3, 2009 action by directing the City Attorney's Office to amend the revised Hollywood SUD ordinance to include the elimination of supergraphics and other related programs.

As stated in the motion, many new developments related to supergraphic signs have arisen within the Hollywood Community and have caused considerable community concern, and have raised ongoing legal questions about the appropriateness of such signs.

#### **CHARTER SECTIONS 558 AND 559**

Charter Section 558 requires that the City Planning Commission approve or disapprove a final draft ordinance, unless such review is delegated to the Director of Planning. As provided under the authority of Charter Section 559, City Plan Case No. 13505-A, and the City Planning Commission Resolution of August 11, 2000, the Director of Planning may approve or disapprove proposed ordinances on behalf of the City Planning Commission based upon the Commissions' latest action on the matter.

For this action, the Director of Planning has agendized the current revisions to the Hollywood Signage SUD as initiated by the July 13, 2010 motion and prepared and transmitted by the City Attorney for the City Planning Commission's approval or disapproval on the matter.

**DISCUSSION/ISSUES**

The transmitted draft ordinance from the City Attorney per City Council direction makes the following changes to the original amendments to the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District which were approved by the City Planning Commission on January 8, 2009:

- 1.) Prohibit Supergraphics as an allowed sign type within the Hollywood SUD
- 2.) Eliminate the Sign Reduction Program
- 3.) Prohibit Electronic Message Displays (Digital Displays) as wall signs.

**Supergraphic Signs / Sign Reduction Program**

Citywide, signage has become an increasingly central and at times contentious issue for business owners and residents of Hollywood and greater Los Angeles. Since the adoption of the Hollywood SUD in 2003, the supergraphic program has been utilized by numerous projects in Hollywood, including the W Hotel, the Sunset and Vine Tower, and the Madam Tussauds building. Under the current Ordinance and the previous City Planning Commission approved changes in 2009, a building may be permitted a total of two (2) supergraphic signs with a minimum size of 1,200 square feet. Under the amendments approved by the CPC in January 2009, supergraphics were continued as a permitted sign type.

Associated with the approval of supergraphic signs is the sign reduction program. In summary, the sign reduction program requires an applicant to utilize "credits" obtained from the removal of a pole sign and/or billboard (either on or off-site) within the Hollywood Community Plan Area in order to construct a supergraphic sign on their property (within the SUD).

During the public process for the initial revisions, there was much dialogue regarding the merits, appropriateness, size, and location of supergraphic signs. If supergraphics are prohibited as an allowed sign type and the associated program is deleted from the Hollywood SUD, an incentive to takedown billboard/pole signs will be removed. However, since the adoption of the Hollywood SUD in 2003, the sign reduction program has had limited success in incentivizing the removal of billboards and pole signs in the Hollywood community.

A grandfather clause has been added to the proposed amendments which will allow developments that have previously obtained entitlements for supergraphics before November 2008 to retain the rights for the life of the entitlement.

**Electronic Message Displays (Digital Displays)**

Electronic Message Displays or Digital Displays, are defined as displays that use still images, scrolling images, or moving images, including video and animation, utilizing a series or grid of lights that may be changed through electronic means, including cathode ray, light emitting diode display (LED), plasma screen, liquid crystal display (LCD), fiber optic, or other electronic media or technology. The current ordinance and the initial revisions permit electronic message display signage as wall signs or theater marquees signs and limit their location to certain signalized blocks within the SUD.

During the public outreach and public adoption process, the Department of City Planning heard that it is important for any ordinance amendments to take into account changing technology. Many representatives of the sign industry felt that electronic signage should be permitted throughout the district, not just on certain buildings or in certain locations. However, there was also a high level of concern among residents regarding light and traffic impacts.

The proposed changes will limit Electronic Message Display signs to theater marquee signs only. Additionally, the term "Electronic Message Display" will be replaced with "Digital Display". The term "Digital Display" is found in the L.A.M.C. and is a universal term that is very similar to

Electronic Message Display. Also, in order to address community concerns regarding lighting, additional regulations governing lighting of these signs has been retained.

### **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION**

The final draft ordinance transmitted by the City Attorney continues the vast majority of the initial changes approved by the City Planning Commission, including reducing the overall permitted combined sign area from four square feet to two square feet of sign area per linear frontage, prohibiting Temporary Special Displays (TSDs), Inflatable Devices, High Rise Signs, Skyline/Logo signs, and making modifications to the Open Panel Roof Sign regulations.

The proposed amendments as modified by the City Council action further prohibits Supergraphics signs, eliminates the sign reduction program and prohibits Electronic Message Display (Digital Display) signs as wall signs. Such actions are consistent with the goals of the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District and Hollywood Community Plan. The actions acknowledge and promote the continuing contribution of signage that is distinctive to the aesthetic of Hollywood while managing and controlling blight created by poorly placed, badly designed signs.

Citywide, signage has become an increasingly central and at times contentious issue for business owners and residents of Hollywood and greater Los Angeles. In this difficult context, the Department has been especially rigorous in the work undertaken on this amendment. The Department of City Planning has reviewed the proposed changes and recommends approval of the draft Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District amendments as transmitted by the City Attorney and initiated by the City Council motion.

## FINDINGS

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/CEQA FINDINGS

A Mitigated Negative Declaration [ENV-2003-1377-MND (REC1)] (Exhibit C) was prepared for the original Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District amendments and was adopted by the City Planning Commission on January 8, 2009. The proposed ordinance prepared by the City Attorney, per City Council direction, will prohibit Supergraphics as an allowed sign type within the Hollywood Signage SUD, eliminate the sign reduction program and limit Electronic Message Displays (Digital Displays) to Marquee Signs. On the basis of the whole of the record before the lead agency, no known additional environmental impacts will be caused by the revised ordinance. With the imposition of the mitigation measures described in the MND, there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment.

### GENERAL PLAN/CHARTER FINDINGS

The following findings are provided regarding the attached, draft ordinance:

#### **City Charter Section 556**

Los Angeles City Charter Section 556 and LAMC Section 12.32(C)(7) require that prior to adopting a land use ordinance the City Council make findings that the ordinance is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan. The attached draft ordinance prepared and transmitted by the City Attorney is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan in the following respects:

The Hollywood Community Plan was adopted by the City Council on December 13, 1988. The draft amendment to the Hollywood SUD is in conformance with the following goals and objectives of the Community Plan:

- 1. To coordinate the development of Hollywood with that of other parts of the City of Los Angeles and the metropolitan area. To further the development of Hollywood as a major center of population, employment, retail services, and entertainment; and to perpetuate its image as the international center of the motion picture industry.**

The attached draft ordinance proposes changes to regulations in order to encourage the construction, maintenance and retention of contemporary and historic forms of signage which will promote the advancement of a unique sign program for an area which is undergoing resurgence in commercial development. The draft ordinance proposes changes that would regulate the use of contemporary types of signage such as Electronic Message Displays (Digital Displays) for both on and off-site advertising. On and off-site advertising continues to be important to the economics of developing major commercial and entertainment facilities in Hollywood. In addition, the amended regulations will encourage iconic signs held to high architectural design standards to ensure that Hollywood perpetuates its image as an international center of the motion picture industry.

- 2. Land Use Commerce Standards and Criteria: The focal point of the Community is the Hollywood Center. This center area shall function as the commercial center for Hollywood and surrounding communities as an entertainment center for the entire region. Future development should be compatible with existing commercial**

**development, surrounding residential neighborhoods and the transportation and circulation system.**

This draft ordinance proposes changes that would enhance the Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District's unique sign program to help create a visually exciting pedestrian environment which maximizes the visibility of Hollywood's historic architecture and distinguishes this area from that of nearby commercial areas. The draft Hollywood SUD amended regulations are designed to protect views of character-defining features of historic structures, views of the nearby Hollywood Hills, and Hollywood's scenic highways, including Sunset Boulevard. Amended regulations to protect these views include: 1) eliminating supergraphics as an allowed sign type, 2) incorporating lighting and design standards for all signs, and (3) reducing maximum permitted combined sign area by half. The draft ordinance also includes incentives for restoring historic signage on historic structures as a means of deriving additional revenue which may be used for the rehabilitation and maintenance of these structures. Amended regulations to minimize distractions to motorists caused by full motion electronic message displays (digital displays) include: allowing electronic message displays (digital displays) to only be permitted as Marquee Signs and requiring electronic message displays (digital displays) to have both a daytime and nighttime illumination.

**Charter Section 558**

Los Angeles City Charter Section 558 and LAMC Section 12.32(C)(7) require that prior to adopting a land use ordinance, the City Council make findings that the ordinance conforms with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice. The Hollywood Signage Supplemental Use District draft ordinance conforms to public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice in the following respects:

The amendments to the Hollywood Signage SUD will enhance the unique characteristics of signage in Hollywood; promote historic signage in Hollywood; encourage enhanced aesthetics and quality lighting design of new signage; continue to encourage the development of new sign technologies while preserving historic architecture.

The draft ordinance contributes to the general welfare and good zoning practice by regulating signage in a manner that promotes a distinctive Hollywood design aesthetic, permitting signage which:

- Highlights the entertainment industry and other local businesses;
- Creates a lively, visually exciting atmosphere in Hollywood, while maintaining historic signage and structures;
- Allows newer building-mounted sign technologies which coordinate with and minimally obscure a building's architectural elements;
- Minimizes the obstruction of architectural elements, views of historic architecture, the Hollywood Hills, the Hollywood Sign, and scenic corridors;
- Protects residents from glare and protects pedestrians and motorists from traffic safety hazards.

**HOLLYWOOD SIGNAGE SUPPLEMENTAL USE DISTRICT FINDINGS**

The draft ordinance furthers the following Hollywood Signage SUD purposes:

1. Provide for the systematic execution of the Hollywood Community Plan and Redevelopment Plan.
2. Promote appropriate and economically viable signage that:
  - Coordinates with the architectural elements of the building on which signage is located;
  - Reflects a modern, vibrant image of Hollywood as the global center of the entertainment industry; and
  - Compliments and protects the character-defining features of historic buildings.
3. Limit visual clutter by regulating the number, size, and location of signs.
4. Minimize potential traffic hazards and protect public safety.
5. Protect street views and scenic vistas of the Hollywood Sign and the Hollywood Hills.
6. Protect and enhance major commercial corridors and properties.
7. Provide a public benefit and enhancement to the community environment.