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**Greater Griffith Park
Neighborhood Council**
*Your Neighborhood. Your Voice.
Your Council.*



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March 17, 2009

City Planning Commission
City of Los Angeles
City Hall
Room 525
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

CPC-2009-0008-CA
Proposed Amendments to Sign Regulations
Hearing Set for March 18, 2009

Dear Commissioners:

Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council considered the proposed sign regulations contained in the Recommendation Report of the Department of City Planning dated February 19, 2009, at its meeting earlier this evening. This review followed a meeting of GGPNC's Planning, Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee on March 9, 2009, at which Mr. Alan Bell of the Department presented the proposal and responded to questions. Both the GGPNC meeting and the meeting of its committee were duly noticed and available for public comment, which was received at both meetings.

We advise you as follows:

1. We believe that the recommended regulation of signage as proposed by the Department under your direction is generally an excellent solution to the current problems of proliferation of illegal and offensive signs. We congratulate both you and the Department in your leadership in this regard and **urge you to continue the political process of substantial revision of the zoning and other codes regarding this problem.**
2. We believe the distinction between "**on site**" and "**off site**" signs should be retained; however, a definition of "on site" sign should be adopted to truly reflect the common-sense distinction, such as providing that a sign which advertises a product or service sold on site must be for a product or service that provides no less than a certain percentage (e.g., 25%) of that business's monthly income during the period the product or service is advertised.
3. We believe the City must commit to providing a substantially larger number of employees to **enforce the ordinance**, which should be funded by effective collection of fines owed by violators. Thus, the fines should go first to fund enforcement and then to the extent the fines exceed the cost of enforcement they should go to general funds. Alternatively, inspection fees should be set at an amount to adequately fund the cost of enforcement.
4. We believe a **private right of action** should be available to all not just those living or owning property within a specific boundary. The ordinance should provide for the payment out of the administrative or court proceedings for legal and "bounty" fees for successful

prosecution. This will encourage enforcement. The private right would arise only if the City fails to take prompt action first after notice of violation.

5. We believe **fin**es should be imposed against the person or entity determining the message on the sign (i.e., advertiser) as well as the land owner and owner of the sign. Enforcement might include revocation of the offender's business license if there are any unpaid fines.

6. We believe there should be **no new sign districts** allowed. Moreover, we believe there should be no "grandfathering" of sign districts for which applications were filed after July 29, 2008. As to any sign district benefiting from grandfathering or if new sign districts are allowed such sign districts should be regulated so that (a) new signs in such a district will be offset by the removal of an equal number of square feet of signs in the area abutting the sign district, (b) provision shall be made that areas outside of the district will be protected from the effects of signs within the district and (c) notice of a proposed sign district be broadly provided to areas adjacent to the proposed district with full opportunity for those outside the district but potentially affected by it to be heard.

7. We support continued **prohibition of super graphics, digital signs and new roof signs**.

8. We believe the Department of Building and Safety should promptly perform its obligation of **determining which of the signs in the City are now "illegal"**, not having been constructed in accordance with a permit, and enforce the applicable current ordinances.

9. We believe there should be a **special task force** of representatives of the Department of Building and Safety, the Planning Department, the City Attorney, the Fire Department, the Department of Water and Power, the Community Redevelopment Agency and representatives of the public such as neighborhood councils to review and report to the City Planning Commission on a regular basis the effectiveness of the current ordinance and any new ordinance, with recommendation for modification. The cost of such a task force should be assessed as part of the business tax on billboard operators.

10. We believe proposed Section 14.4.20, relating to continuation of **nonconforming signs**, should be modified to incorporate an amortization schedule. Following the amortization period the nonconforming sign shall be removed, and signage shall conform to the sign ordinance then in effect.

11. With respect to **appeals of an order to comply** - we believe that notice should be given to abutting property owners and the neighborhood council for the area of the date, place and time of the hearing. Abutting owners as well as neighborhood councils have an interest in such matters and should have the opportunity to comment.

12. We believe the **City should apply the principles adopted for signage on private property to their own property** to the extent the signs and properties are comparable.

Very truly yours,

Philip Gasteier, President

By Kenneth E. Owen
Chair, Planning, Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee

Cc: members of the City Council
Alan Bell