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November 1, 2023

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**REPORT ON CITY PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL FOR
METRO TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATION NETWORK ORDINANCE; CF 22-0392**

This report has been prepared in response to the City Planning Commission hearing on September 14, 2023, to discuss additional topics for considerations by the PLUM Committee and potential additional actions for Council Consideration.

BACKGROUND

On September 14, 2023, the City Planning Commission (CPC) approved and recommended adoption of the proposed Metro Transportation Communication Network (TCN) Ordinance put forth by the Department of City Planning (City Planning) with changes that reduced the overall number of signs from 49 off-site Sign Structures and 86 digital displays to 46 off-site Sign Structures and 80 digital displays. The 46 off-site Sign Structures include 30 freeway-facing signs and 16 non-freeway facing signs. All signs are located on Commercial, Manufacturing or Public Facilities-zoned lots owned by Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) along freeways and major corridors throughout the City of Los Angeles. CPC also recommended approval of two additional standards that require: 1) installation of public art on one side of 11 single-sided Sign Structures; and 2) distancing requirements between TCN Sign Structures on the same side of the freeway.

The proposed Metro TCN Ordinance includes a total of three ordinances: two enabling ordinances that amend Article 3 of Chapter 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), referred to as the current Zoning Code, and Article 8 of Chapter 1A of the LAMC, referred to as the New Zoning Code, to establish the Metro TCN Supplemental Use District (SUD); and an implementation ordinance that contains all regulations, processes, and procedures of the Metro TCN SUD and associated Zone Changes to the affected properties.

In addition to the recommended change by CPC, which are reflected in the proposed ordinance, transmitted to the Council File on October 26, 2023, CPC instructed City Planning to report on recommendations for installing vertical louvers to further prevent light spillage onto adjacent properties. CPC also requested analysis to compare the Metro TCN night time illumination standards for the digital display sign faces to the City of Inglewood's approved digital display signs as a reference point. Lastly, CPC requested that Planning convey the Committee's desire to see the revenue expenditures spent in proximity to the sign locations and for public transit, pedestrian, and cyclist related improvement projects that are in service of the communities within which the signs are erected. City Planning has prepared this report for the City Council's consideration on these matters.

ADDITIONAL LOUVER STANDARDS

During the Commission's deliberations, the digital display louvers were discussed as an effective tool to limit light trespass and target digital images towards the intended audience. In an effort to further minimize light spillage on unintended uses, the City Planning Commission instructed the Department to make recommendations to increase the number of signs that include both vertical and horizontal louvers, particularly for signs that are in proximity to sensitive receptors.

Currently, the proposed Ordinance includes two freeway-facing TCN Support Structures that are set to have both horizontal and vertical louvers installed on their digital display sign faces (FF-25, and FF-30). These two freeway-facing Support Structures include both louvers in order to further limit the light trespass onto adjacent properties due to their close proximity to the Sepulveda Wildlife Basin (FF-25) and the Ballona Wetlands Reserve (FF-30). The remaining 44 TCN Support Structures are proposed with only horizontal louvers on the digital display sign face, which are intended to reduce any potential upright glare and shield from light emitting above the horizontal plane. This will restrict the amount of upward-directed light and protect the dark sky at night.

Based upon the Commission's discussion and instructions, Planning staff has identified two categories of sensitive receptors, *see Tables 1 and 2 below*, in which additional vertical louvers should be considered. These include existing residential uses (at the time of this analysis) and existing open space including; city parks, rivers, and natural habitat. Upon analyzing the surrounding uses within 500 feet of the 44 locations proposed to have horizontal louvers only, staff recommends an additional 22 TCN locations that are recommended to include vertical louvers, this includes both single- and double-sided digital displays. The signs listed below are divided into the two categories of proximity to open space and residential uses. In addition, Table 1 and 2 also categorizes the signs as freeway-facing (FF) and non-freeway facing (NFF) and includes the sign number. Both the roadway orientation and the sign numbers are conventions used to identify individual signs in the proposed Ordinance. This recommendation applies to 14 freeway-facing signs and eight non-freeway facing signs, which is largely due to the fact that there are more than double the amount of freeway-facing signs proposed in the program, and the City's land use and development pattern which includes residential and recreational uses near the various freeways that bisect the City.

Table 1. Proposed TCN Signs within 500ft. of Existing Open Space:

<i>Freeway-Facing Signs</i>	<i>Within 500 Feet of:</i>
FF-5	South Weddington Park
FF-6	Elysian Park & LA River
FF-7	Elysian Park & LA River
FF-10	LA River
FF-11	LA River

<i>Non-Freeway Facing Signs</i>	<i>Within 500 Feet of:</i>
NFF-1	Sepulveda Wildlife Basin
NFF-4	South Weddington Park
NFF-5	South Weddington Park

Table 2. Proposed TCN Signs within 500 ft of Residential Uses:

<i>Freeway-Facing Signs</i>	<i>Within 500 Feet of Residential Uses on:</i>
FF-8	Pomeroy Ave
FF-9	Mitchell Pl
FF-21	Flower St
FF-26	Exposition Blvd
FF-27	Exposition Blvd
FF-28	Exposition Blvd
FF-32	Aviation Blvd
FF-33	58th St
FF-34	Olive St

<i>Non-Freeway Facing Signs</i>	<i>Within 500 Feet of Residential Uses on:</i>
NFF-6	4th St
NFF-11	67th St
NFF-12	Obama Blvd
NFF-19	Beverly Blvd
NFF-22	Alameda

ILLUMINATION STANDARDS COMPARISON

At the City Planning Commission hearing, Planning Staff was instructed to look into the nighttime illumination standards for the digital display sign faces in comparison to the City of Inglewood’s sign regulations for digital display signs. Illumination and brightness standards are in place to minimize light trespass onto adjacent properties and are often used to calibrate digital signage displays relative to the ambient light when transitioning from daytime to nighttime.

The illumination standards within the proposed Metro TCN Ordinance are in alignment with many of the City’s previously adopted Sign Districts. The Ordinance before Council proposes a maximum luminance of 300 candelas per square meter at night and 6000 candelas per square meter during the daytime, and limits the brightness of the digital displays to 0.3 foot candles above ambient lighting at the property line of the adjacent residential zone. Whereas the City of Inglewood allows a maximum luminance of 400 candelas during the day and night time, and a maximum luminance of 0.2 foot candles above ambient lighting at the property line of the adjacent residential zone.

The refresh rate for the digital displays in the Metro TCN district will allow for one refresh every eight seconds, while this requirement is not specified in the City of Inglewood general sign regulations. Similarly, the operating hours for the digital display sign faces within the Metro TCN district is limited to the hours of 5 a.m. to 12 a.m. whereas the City of Inglewood general sign regulations is silent on the hours of operations.

In summary, the City of Los Angeles digital display signage is regulated by an adopted Supplemental Use District, Sign District or Specific Plan Overlay with embedded sign regulations for digital display signs, whereas the City of Inglewood regulates their digital signage by way of a negotiated agreement and special use permits on a more of a case-by-case basis. So while it’s more difficult to compare each standard across both cities, on the whole, the general sign regulations and standards in the City of Inglewood are less restrictive compared to the more nuanced general sign regulations and standards within the City of Los Angeles.

REVENUE EXPENDITURES

Finally, the Planning Commission deliberated on the expected revenue outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City and Metro (C-139852) as a result of the off-site digital advertising component of the program. While the MOA dictates the revenue split between the two public agencies and the use for the funds, generally, the details on how, where and when the funds would be spent had not yet been specified.

Shortly after the CPC hearing, the City Administrative Office (CAO) transmitted a report on September 28, 2023, per Council instruction, where details related to the funds and expenditures are discussed at length. Importantly, the report covers the legislative process that is needed to create the Transportation Communications Network Revenue Fund, and other pertinent details that are relative to the Planning Commission's discussion.

While the Commission acknowledged that the expenditures are not a land use matter, there was an expressed desire to convey the importance of spending the revenue in close proximity to where the signs are being erected and on public transit improvements that benefit the community in which the signs are proposed. Moving forward the Council will have both the Commission's deliberation and the CAO's detailed recommendations to guide future considerations.

CONCLUSION

In summary, based on Commission's instructions as well as the public comments received at the September 14, 2023 hearing, staff recommends that the additional 22 signs require vertical louvers, in addition to the proposed horizontal louvers, to reduce light trespass on nearby sensitive receptors. This recommendation will target the intelligent transportation communication messaging and off-site advertising to the intended audience and eliminate residual light pollution and potential quality of life impacts on nearby residents and users of public parks and open space throughout the City.

Lastly, staff has enclosed the updated and revised findings of fact, in accordance with CEQA, for adoption by City Council to reflect the changes from CPC. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please direct them to Terri Osborne via email at terri.osborne@lacity.org.

Sincerely,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

VPB:AV:hsc:nc:lr:to

Enclosures

Revised CEQA Findings