

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

Date: April 18, 2014

To: Honorable Members of the Economic Development Committee: Mayor Pro Tem Tennell Atkins (Chair), Rick Callahan (Vice Chair), Jerry R. Allen, Scott Griggs, Lee Kleinman and Adam Medrano

Subject: Digital Billboard Review

On Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, you will be briefed on the status of the digital billboard ordinance passed by City Council on June 8, 2011. The ordinance will sunset on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 but the ordinance includes a provision that City Council will review the digital billboard provisions prior to that date. A copy of the briefing is attached. Please contact David Cossum at 670-4127 should you have any questions or need additional information.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theresa O'Donnell".

Theresa O'Donnell  
Interim Assistant City Manager

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
A.C. Gonzalez, City Manager  
Warren M.S. Ernst, City Attorney  
Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Judge Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge  
Ryan S. Evans, Interim First Assistant City Manager  
Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager  
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager  
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
Charles M. Cato, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer  
Shaun Williams, Interim Public Information Officer  
David Cossum, Interim Director Sustainable Development and Construction  
Rick Galceran, Director, Public Works  
Elsa Cantu, Assistant to the City Manager – Mayor and Council

# Digital Billboard Review

**City Council  
Economic Development Committee  
April 21, 2014**



# Purpose

- The purpose of this briefing is to:
  - Update City Council on the number of signs that have been converted to digital display technology and the resulting number of signs removed to allow for the conversion based on the code amendment adopted on June 8, 2011 which will sunset on August 1, 2014.
  - Receive guidance from the Committee as to whether the existing provisions should be extended, and if any amendments to the provisions should be considered.

# Background

- On June 8, 2011, City Council approved a code amendment to allow certain billboards on freeways to convert to digital technology.
- The code amendment included a provision that the regulations allowing digital conversion would expire on August 1, 2014.
- The ordinance required that for every 1 square foot of billboard converted to digital technology 3 square feet of static billboard had to be removed elsewhere.
- The ordinance capped the number of locations that could include a digital sign at 50 locations (if a two-sided sign existed at a location, both signs may be able to be converted to digital and count as one location)

# Background

- Other ordinance provisions included:
  - Displays must automatically adjust sign brightness dependent upon ambient light conditions
  - Messages must be displayed for a minimum of 8 seconds and the message change must be accomplished in 2 seconds
  - Change of message must occur simultaneously on the entire sign face
  - No flashing, dimming or brightening of message is permitted except to accommodate the change of message
  - City may require emergency information to be displayed

# Background

- Other ordinance provisions related to location included:
  - Digital display signs must be located on an expressway
  - Signs cannot be located within 300 feet of a lot in a residential zoning district
  - Signs cannot be located within 500 feet of an historic district
  - Signs cannot be located within 2,000 feet of the Trinity River or within 500 feet of the escarpment zone.
  - Digital display signs must be located a minimum of 1,500 feet from another digital display sign oriented to the same traffic direction (2,000 feet if the location has back to back digital displays)

# Background

- Permit status to date:
  - All 50 location permits have been issued
  - 44 locations have been converted to include digital faces
  - 451 sign structures have been removed with 859 sign faces
  - The majority of sign faces removed were smaller signs on local arterials

# Issues

- If the digital provisions sunset and are not renewed, existing digital signs will remain as non-conforming signs.
- Non-conforming signs are signs that were legally erected pursuant to a valid permit and may remain and be maintained at their current location.
- Non-conforming signs may not be repaired if the cost of repair is more than 60 percent of the cost of erecting a new sign of the same type at the same location.

# Issues

- Most of the concerns expressed to the department to date have been related to the brightness of signs in conditions other than daylight.
- Some concerns have also been received relative to the message change and how that brings attention to a digital display to a greater degree than a static message had previously

# Possible Additional Considerations

- Adjust brightness standards
- Allow digital conversion with reduced sign area exchange for billboard relocations due to right-of-way acquisition (would not move the sign, just convert an existing sign to digital).

# Next Steps

- Receive direction from the committee and proceed as instructed.
- Continue to monitor regulatory best practices