



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:19-6829

Agenda Item Number: 4.

Agenda Date: 9/9/2019

In Control: Planning and Community Development Committee

DEPARTMENT: Development Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Shannon, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on Proposed Changes Related to Digital Billboards, Chapter 28 - Sign Code

SUMMARY:

Possible changes to Chapter 28 - Sign Code which will allow for digital faces to be placed on the backside of thirteen (13) existing digital billboards plus the possibility of converting one (1) additional existing billboard from static to digital.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In the 1980s, there were around 2,300 billboards within the San Antonio City limits and, over time, that number has decreased to around 1,200 billboards. Additional billboards are prohibited within the City and in order to relocate a billboard, two billboards must be removed. Similarly, new digital billboards are prohibited within the City and the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.

Clear Channel Outdoor has developed a proposal to allow digital faces to be added to the backside of existing digital billboards by removing an estimated 300 junior billboards as well as removal of some large billboards along scenic, urban and/or historic corridors. Such action would result in increasing the number of digital billboards by decreasing the overall number of billboards within City limits. Clear Channel Outdoor proposes to remove four billboards for each new digital face installed.

The Development Services Department (DSD) presented this proposed change to the City's sign code to the Planning and Community Development Committee on August 12, 2019. During that meeting, the committee

reviewed and voted to approve the proposal to allow additional digital faces to be installed on only the existing thirteen (13) digital billboards.

The committee members also reviewed additional proposals that were discussed during the stakeholder meetings and community input process, most notably a proposal from Outfront Media to allow them to install digital faces on one existing static (i.e., non-digital) billboard in the City if they were to take down billboards at a four-to-one (4:1) sq.ft. ratio. The committee did not approve moving forward with that proposal. However, since then, Outfront Media has modified their proposal to include the removal of a greater number of existing billboards (8 structures total). The purpose of this briefing would be for the committee to review this modified proposal to determine if it should be included in the current proposed sign code changes.

Prior to the August 12th Planning and Community Development meeting, DSD held three stakeholder meetings on February 26, 2019, April 5, 2019, and August 6, 2019, to discuss the proposal. Some of the stakeholders included representatives from the Texas Sign Association, billboard operators, and Scenic San Antonio. DSD also held one community meeting through SA SpeakUp on May 15, 2019, to obtain community input and released two surveys through SA SpeakUp to seek input from the community on specifics related to the proposal. DSD also presented the proposed changes to Chapter 28 at the City's Building-Related and Fire Codes Appeals and Advisory Board in August 2019.

The major change to Chapter 28 will be the ability for digital faces to be added to the backside of thirteen (13) existing digital billboards. Other static billboards, to include an estimated 300 junior billboards as well as large billboards along scenic, urban and/or historic corridors, will need to be removed before the backside of a digital face is added to an existing digital billboard. In addition, the committee will consider whether to allow one additional location to be allowed to be converted to a digital billboard based upon the revised proposal form Outfront Media.

ISSUE:

Chapter 28 Sign Code revisions require City Council approval.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Committee could choose not to take any action at this time and leave Chapter 28 - Sign Code as is and maintain the current number of digital billboards.

The Committee could choose to allow billboard operators to add digital faces to the backside of existing billboards by removing existing static billboards throughout the city.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact. This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Committee approval of the proposed changes to Chapter 28 - Sign Code and to move to full City Council consideration.