

AGENDA



Thursday, May 8, 2008

Public Hearings and Possible Actions
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Item No. 89

Subject: Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending Chapter 25-10, Sign Regulations and Chapter 13-2, Ground Transportation Services to clarify Chapter 25-10 and allow off-premise signs on limited portions of scenic roadways; prohibit advertisements on vehicles if such vehicles are driven solely or primarily for the purpose of advertising businesses that are unrelated to the vehicle's primary business; allow signs to be relocated to commercial districts with sign face areas of up to 672 square feet; change the way sign height is measured; define elevated travel ways and except major interchanges and intersections from that definition; clarify sign location measurements; allow the face size of newly relocated signs to be as large as the total aggregate square footage of the signs being relocated; require off-premise sign owners to register the signs and pay fees for all signs within the city's planning jurisdiction; require energy efficient, pollution reduction lighting for off-premise signs within a certain time frame; require annual registration of all non-conforming off-premise signs; prohibit signs owners from relocating a sign if that sign owner is in violation of the sign regulations; establish notice requirement to notify sign owners of registration expiration; clarify and establish penalties for violations of the sign regulations; and impose registration requirements and registration fees on vehicles that transport passengers for profit and advertise unrelated businesses; and other clarifying amendments.

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Boards and Commission Action: Reviewed by the Design Commission; Urban Transportation Commission; Codes and Ordinances Subcommittee of the Planning Commission; and Planning Commission.

On November 8, 2007, the Austin City Council passed Resolution 20071108-128 initiating amendments to Chapter 25-10 (Sign Regulations) of the Land Development Code. The proposed amendments:

- Allow signs on limited commercial corridors within the scenic roadway sign districts,
- Ban motor-operated mobile billboards,
- Impose registration fees upon taxis that advertise unrelated businesses,
- Impose new requirements on the relocation of billboards, and
- Shift the responsibility for registering billboards from the property owners to sign owners.

The amendment imposing registration fees for taxicabs also requires a revision to City Code Chapter 13 (Ground Transportation Passenger Services).

In carrying out the Council's direction, staff met with stakeholders representing the outdoor advertising industry, mobile billboard industry, taxicab companies, Scenic Austin, and Capital Metro to discuss the proposed amendments. Stakeholders met on three occasions to discuss the proposed amendments. Additionally, Scenic Austin and billboard sign companies met independently to identify segments of scenic roadways best suited for the relocation of billboards. While the stakeholders were unable to reach agreement on most issues, they did recommend that the code amendments be considered in three separate categories:

- Off-premise Signs/Billboard Issues
- Mobile Billboard Issues

- Taxicab Requirements

An amendment tracking sheet that combines the recommendations from each commission is attached.
(See Exhibit A)

Staff also recommends that if changes are made to the height measurements, the proposed sign regulations incorporate a map (Exhibit D), instead of the textual description of the 2,640 foot distance limitation. The map would better identify the areas around intersections and interchanges in which billboards can be located with a 25 foot increased height.