



# CITY OF CARSON

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

NEW BUSINESS DISCUSSION: February 22, 2011  
SUBJECT: Workshop regarding long-term banners  
APPLICANT: City of Carson  
REQUEST: Discuss and consider long-term banner displays  
PROPERTIES INVOLVED: Commercial properties

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### COMMISSION ACTION

Concurred with staff  
 Did not concur with staff  
 Other

### COMMISSIONERS' VOTE

AYE	NO		AYE	NO	
		Chairman Faletogo			Gordon
		Vice-Chair Park			Saenz
		Brimmer			Schaefer
		Diaz			Verrett
		Goolsby			

***Item No. 12A***

## I. Introduction

On January 25, 2011, the City Council Commercial & Public Signage Subcommittee considered a proposal from David Dupetit of 3 Men's Suits \$129.99, to allow year-round banners for the shopping center at 20761-20775 S. Avalon Boulevard. The Subcommittee directed staff to bring the item as a workshop to the Planning Commission for consideration. The Subcommittee recommended that the Planning Commission discuss allowing banners and other business signs to be displayed for an extended amount of time.

On February 10, 2011, staff met with Mr. Dupetit and discussed his interest in an ordinance amendment to allow year-round banners for commercial properties located within 500 feet of the 405 Freeway, including his store. He indicated a desire to display a 5-foot-high by 50-foot-wide banner facing the freeway. He also mentioned a willingness to consider four-foot-high permanent channel letters if temporary foam letters were considered first and the increased size was effectively visible from the freeway. He does not wish to provide landscaping but is willing to provide some enhanced architectural features.

## II. Background

On July 20, 2010, at the request of the Mayor, the City Council considered an item to allow long-term temporary business signs for the 15,940-square-foot shopping center at 20761-20775 S. Avalon Boulevard. Although the shopping center is located across from the South Bay Pavilion, it does not qualify for a long-term temporary business sign under the current Ordinance because of the building size and its location outside of a Mixed Use Residential overlay district. The City Council referred the item to the Planning Commission to study and report on amending Section 9136.7(C) of the Carson Municipal Code regarding long-term temporary business signs.

On August 12, 2010, the City Council Commercial and Public Signage Subcommittee held a meeting to discuss allowing banners and other business signs to be displayed for an extended amount of time. The Sub-Committee was concerned that many small businesses have lost revenue due to the sluggish economy and that temporary business signs such as banners would help increase customer traffic. Currently, Section 9136.7(C) of the Carson Municipal Code (CMC) allows such signs to be displayed for up to 60 calendar days. The Sub-Committee wanted to explore allowing additional time due to economic hardships suffered by many small businesses during the sluggish economy. The issue was referred to the Planning Commission for consideration of an amendment to Section 9136.7(C) of the CMC regarding long-term temporary business signs.

On October 12, 2010, the Planning Commission held a workshop to discuss long-term temporary business signs. Staff researched the ordinances of other cities within the South Bay and throughout the nation and presented its findings to the Commission as shown in Tables 1 and 2.



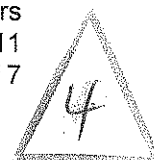
**Table 1: Banners and Temporary Sign Duration for Local Cities**

CITY	DURATION	EXTENDED DURATION
<b>CARSON</b>	<b>60 DAYS PER CALENDAR YEAR</b>	<b>CONSIDERING</b>
<b>El Segundo</b>	30 day maximum per period, no more than 120 per calendar year. Announcement or "Coming Soon" sign allowed for a maximum of one (1) year	<b>Not considered</b>
<b>Gardena</b>	Not to exceed 15 consecutive days or 60 total days in any twelve month period	<b>Not considered</b>
<b>Hawthorne</b>	30 days per calendar year, no more than 2 permits issued per year. 30 extra days for Grand Openings only.	<b>Extension considered</b> City Council considered several months ago, however ordinance did not pass.
<b>Hermosa Beach</b>	90 days per calendar year	<b>Not considered</b>
<b>Inglewood</b>	30 day maximum per period, no more than 60 per calendar year	<b>Not considered</b> Requirement for banner permit only recently adopted 5/25/10. Previous honor system was not working.
<b>Lawndale</b>	90 days per calendar year	<b>Not considered</b>
<b>Lomita</b>	Promotional banners may be displayed up to one hundred twenty (120) days per calendar year, but no longer than sixty (60) consecutive days at any one time, and a minimum of thirty (30) days before the next time the banner is displayed	<b>Not considered</b> Per code: There shall be no extensions granted past the one hundred twenty (120) days.
<b>Manhattan Beach</b>	90 days per calendar year	<b>Not considered</b>
<b>Palos Verdes Estates</b>	1 week (maximum 3 times per year)	<b>Not considered</b>
<b>Rancho Palos Verdes</b>	30 day maximum per period, no more than 120 per calendar year	<b>Not considered</b>
<b>Redondo Beach</b>	30 days per calendar year, no more than 2 permits issued per year. No more than 60 days for banners strictly associated with initial grand opening.	<b>Not officially considered</b> They have been more lenient with the code because of the economy, allowing 2 permits per year, 30 days each. Grand opening can add 30 days for a total of 90 days.
<b>Torrance</b>	90 days per calendar year	<b>Not considered</b> Extension beyond 90 days requires approval from Environmental Quality Commission, subject to certain conditions (has never occurred).



**Table 2: Summary of Actions Taken by Other Cities in U.S.**

SOURCE AND DATE	TITLE / ARTICLE NAME	CITY	SUMMARY
Agoura Hills Patch 7/20/10	Banners Prove Boon to Business	Agoura Hills, CA	Retail advertising banners can display up to four times with a maximum of 10 days per period and 40 days per year. The maximum banner size increased from 20 to 30 square feet. Policy will be reviewed in July 2011.
USATODAY.com 1/6/09	Cities ease signage rules to boost business	Agoura Hills, CA  Boynton Beach, FL  Victorville, CA	The City Council decided in 10/09 to waive the fee and expedite permitting for businesses wanting to hang temporary banners advertising sales or special events.  The City Commission is likely by 2/09 to give businesses more time to display a banner, extending the period from 14 to 90 days a year.  The City Council in 6/09 allowed a large commercial center to increase the size of a sign advertising its various businesses by as much as 25%. The council is considering other business strips to do the same by spring.
City of Claremont 11/10/09	Urgency Ord. 2009-19	Claremont, CA	Businesses may request certain exemptions from municipal code; Ord. suspends the development review fee associated with temporary signs; Ord. automatically expire on 12/31/10
Beacononlinenews.com 5/18/10	De Bary businesses get break on signs during recession times	De Bary, FL	City council decided on 5/5/10: 1. Sign area: 16 square feet max. 2. Regulations apply only to shopping centers and business districts. 3. The signs may be displayed only during business hours. 4. The signs must comply with all other provisions of the sign ordinance. 5. The temporary regulation will expire on 12/31/10.
City Council Agenda Report 6/15/10	Temporary Sign Regulations	Galt, CA	Consideration of temporary regulations; staff recommended upholding current regulations, but gave Council alternatives
Allbusiness.com 7/19/10	OV council will revisit sign code to aid businesses hit by economy	Oro Valley, AZ	Considering nearly two dozen changes that would increase the allowable size, type and number of business signs and the length of time they may be displayed



SOURCE AND DATE	TITLE / ARTICLE NAME	CITY	SUMMARY
OCRegister.com	Poll: How much impact from recession?	Orange County	Poll of small businesses and how the economy has impacted sales; 43% indicate recession is the worst they've ever experienced; more than half said 2008 gross revenues were worse than 2007.
Allbusiness.com 1/31/10	'Temporary' banners at issue	Tucson, AZ	Tucson's attempt to update sign ordinance faces opposition from Chamber and small businesses. Loophole in code allows for year-round banners. Council wants 180-day limit but is wary of down economy.
Investopedia.com	The Impact Of Recession On Businesses	n/a	Article indicates smaller businesses may have a harder time surviving a recession. Bankruptcies among smaller businesses may occur at a higher rate than larger firms.
City of Whittier 7/1/09	Whittier city council approves a local economic stimulus and business assistance plan	Whittier, CA	Amendment changing banner duration from 30 days at a time, four times a year to 12 days per month for 2009-10 fiscal year. Amendment allows for an additional 24 days of banner display per year.
Istockanalyst.com 8/18/10	Y.C. lets businesses keep their banners	Yuba City, CA	The Council added another 6 months to a zoning code amendment that temporarily allows businesses to post banners and signs that would otherwise be in violation.

### *City Council Commercial & Public Signage Subcommittee*

On January 25, 2011, the City Council Commercial & Public Signage Subcommittee held a meeting to discuss a banner proposal from Mr. Dupetit to allow for year-round banners. The Subcommittee expressed the need to work with businesses that are struggling due to the economy and discussed possibly amending the Carson Municipal Code. Staff mentioned that regulations are in place to allow for temporary banners and expressed concern that conflicts may arise between businesses if too many banners are permitted for an extended amount of time. The Subcommittee urged the Planning Commission to consider options to help businesses through the economy and recommended that if an ordinance amendment is considered, that banners be required to be changed regularly so they do not become decrepit and unsightly.

### **III. Discussion**

Staff has not been able to find any city that allows for year-round display of banners (365 days per year). In the South Bay, only Hawthorne considered amending their ordinance to allow for long-term banner display out of the 12 cities reviewed. Redondo Beach has not officially amended their ordinance, but has become more lenient with enforcement due to the economy. Seven (7) cities allow 90 calendar



days or more; four (4) cities, including Carson, allow up to 60 calendar days; and Palos Verdes Estates had the strictest ordinance requiring banners to be displayed for one week, three times a year.

In staff's literature review of other cities throughout the nation, cities are concerned about the recession's affects on businesses, particularly small businesses. Some cities have adopted a temporary urgency ordinance to allow banners for a longer amount of time; some have waived fees and others have amended requirements. However, none have allowed year-round banners to be displayed.

#### *Current CMC Requirement*

Section 9136.7(C) of the CMC allows for the temporary display of streamers, banners, pennants, and similar displays for up to 60 calendar days per calendar year per business. Requests must be made to the Planning Division 30 days prior to display. The purpose for allowing "temporary signs" is to allow businesses an opportunity to temporarily advertise special events such as grand openings at their businesses without having to bear the cost of using a permanent sign.

#### *Year-Round Display*

Attached as an exhibit is a preliminary proposal that Mr. Dupetit has shared with staff and the City Council Commercial & Public Signage Subcommittee. The issue of fairness is a concern because the request focuses on a particular shopping center, Avalon Plaza, located at 20761-20775 S. Avalon Boulevard. Mr. Dupetit requests that only commercial properties within 500 feet of the 405 Freeway be allowed to display year-round banners. In order to allow year-round banners, an ordinance amendment would have to be considered. If approved, the ordinance amendment may cause a proliferation of banners which could be increasingly harder to enforce, particularly since many businesses do not bother obtaining a permit prior to displaying a banner.

#### *Ordinance*

The Planning Commission could consider an urgency ordinance that would allow temporary signs to be displayed for more than 60 calendar days up to a certain date. As shown in Table 2 above, this has been considered by other cities throughout the nation. After the urgency ordinance expires, businesses would have to remove their temporary signs and the City would revert to enforcing the standard ordinance.

#### *Enforcement*

Planning staff is working with the Code Enforcement Division to find an easier way to identify approved banners. By displaying the banner permit in a conspicuous location on a window by the entrance, code enforcement officers will know if a banner has been approved. Illegal banners would be cited.

#### *3 Men's Suits \$129.99*

Mr. Dupetit continues to pursue opportunities for additional freeway signage. On February 8, 2011, the Planning Commission recently revoked Design Overlay Review No. 1337-09 due to lack of compliance with required conditions of approval. Mr. Dupetit had already removed the 3 foot high letters associated with the freeway



oriented business sign. The revocation precludes re-installation. Mr. Dupetit has suggested his interest in permanent four-foot-high foam or channel letters. The process would require Site Plan and Design Review similar to the three-foot-high channel letters approved by the Planning Commission in 2009 (Design Overlay Review (DOR) No. 1337-09). Variance No. 506-09, which allows the property to exceed the total allowable sign area would also need to be amended since the larger proposed letters would exceed the authorization. Mr. Dupetit should be instructed to submit the necessary applications if such a request is to be fully considered by the Planning Commission.

#### IV. Conclusion

In staff's review, only one other city in the South Bay has considered allowing for long-term display of temporary signs, however, that city did not proceed. Throughout the country, there are cities that have adopted ordinances to help small businesses endure the weakened economy. It is staff's opinion that allowing year-round banners would set a negative precedent that would degrade the aesthetic quality of city and be difficult to enforce. As a means of assisting businesses, staff can support additional display up to 90 days, which is consistent with the cities of Hermosa Beach, Lawndale, Manhattan Beach, and Torrance. Staff would recommend that banners still be subject to a permit to verify the appropriateness of size, location and time period for each display. Banner permits currently consider the size and location for display. The Planning Commission may also consider creating more clear standards in order to control over-sized banners, excessive color and appropriate locations.

#### V. Recommendation


That the Planning Commission:

- CONSIDER and DISCUSS the information provided for in this workshop;
- PROVIDE direction to staff in how to proceed.


#### VI. Exhibits

1. Freeway Signage Proposal for City of Carson dated January 31, 2011
2. January 25, 2011 City Council Commercial & Public Signage Subcommittee agenda and memorandum with attachment

Prepared by:

  
John F. Signo, AICP, Senior Planner

Reviewed by:

  
Sheri Repp Loadsman, Planning Officer

# Freeway Signage Proposal for City of Carson

Submitted by:  
David Dupetit – C.E.O. of SW Suits  
dba: 3 Mens Suits for \$129  
20775 South Avalon  
Carson, CA 90746

January 31, 2011

EXHIBIT NO. 1-





## **Objective**

Proposal for Ordinance change to allow signage or banners on commercial buildings within five hundred feet of freeways within Carson, CA.

## **Details**

The proposed ordinance would apply only to buildings located within five hundred feet of a freeway, and having a wall facing such freeway.

Each application shall be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on factors such as distance from freeway, type and size of signage, etc.

The type and size of signage should be based on the best means of impacting passing traffic thereby maximizing the odds that observers will bring their business to stores within the City of Carson.

Banners shall be properly maintained by the owner, and replaced as needed.

Banners shall be tasteful and pertain to the business name.

*John*



**CITY OF CARSON  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
COMMERCIAL AND PUBLIC SIGNAGE SUBCOMMITTEE**

**AGENDA**

**CITY HALL  
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM  
701 EAST CARSON STREET  
CARSON, CA 90745**

**JANUARY 25, 2011**

**4:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA POSTED: JANUARY 20, 2011**

“In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call the City Clerk’s office at 310-952-1720 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.” (Government Code Section 54954.2)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**ROLL CALL:**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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**NEW BUSINESS (Items 1)**

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**ITEM NO. (1)      BANNER PROPOSAL**

RECOMMENDATION for the City Council Commercial & Public Signage Subcommittee:

1.      RECEIVE and FILE.

ACTION:

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**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

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EXHIBIT NO. 2 -





CITY OF CARSON  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City Council Commercial & Public Signage Subcommittee  
**CC:** Cliff Graves, Acting City Manager  
Sheri Repp-Loadsman, Planning Manager  
**FROM:** John F. Signo, AICP, Senior Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Banner Proposal  
**DATE:** January 25, 2011

The applicant, SW Suits, doing business as 3 Men's Suits \$129.99, submitted a banner proposal for the city of Carson that would allow businesses to display banners for a longer period of time than allowed by the Carson Municipal Code (CMC). The proposal indicates the city would be generating revenue by requiring monthly fees for the display of banners, which would in effect increase sales tax.

Staff has reviewed the proposal and has determined it would require an ordinance amendment to become effective. Currently, Section 9136.7(C) of the CMC allows banners to be displayed for up to 60 calendar days per year subject to approval by the Planning Division. The City Council established a fee of \$50 for the display of a banner. It is staff's understanding that the applicant wishes to amend the display period indefinitely as long as a business is willing to pay a monthly fee for banner display. Consideration of the banner proposal would require an ordinance amendment to Section 9136.7(C) of the CMC that must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. If approved, the ordinance amendment would become effective 30 days after second reading by the City Council. The process would take approximately 6-8 months.

The applicant submitted a similar proposal for an ordinance amendment in 2009 that was considered by the Subcommittee on June 17, 2009. At the conclusion of the meeting, the applicant was urged to work with the property owner in submitting a permanent freeway-oriented sign along the back wall. Subsequently, the ordinance amendment was withdrawn and an application for a permanent sign was submitted to the Planning Division (Design Overlay Review (DOR) No. 1337-09 and Variance (VAR) No. 506-09). The application was approved by the Planning Commission on November 10, 2009, and permanent channel letters were installed on or about April 2010. According to the applicant, the permanent channel letters were ineffective and a long-term banner, as addressed in this banner proposal, would improve business. In January 2011, the channel letters were removed prior to a January 11 Planning Commission hearing for revocation of DOR No. 1337-09 and VAR No. 506-09. The hearing was continued to January 25, 2011. The applicant has been displaying a banner along the back wall in place of the channel letters almost continuously since the 2010 Thanksgiving weekend.

Attachment:

1. Banner Proposal for City of Carson submitted by SW Suits



# Banner Proposal for City of Carson

Submitted by:  
David Dupetit – C.E.O. of SW Suits  
3 Mens Suits for \$129  
20775 South Avalon  
Carson, CA 90746



## Objective

To create a mutually beneficial "Banner Program" that will create additional revenue for the City of Carson through fees and additional Tax dollars as a result of increased sales volume.

In addition the proposed program will increase sales revenues for the businesses in the City of Carson.

## Additional revenue for the City of Carson

This proposal would give the City of Carson the right to collect monthly fees \*(estimated \$180,000 fees annually) for any business that use banners.

In addition the use of banners will increase sales volumes therefore increasing tax dollars \*\*(estimated 86.4 Million dollars of taxable sales annually) paid into the City of Carson which funds the City's annual budget.

## Statement of need

As a result of the currently recessed economy, every business from small owner-operated companies up to major corporations has been affected. We are in a state of survival and need to be creative if we hope to continue growth and even pursue further economic development.

## Findings

After taking a 5 minute drive through our city, I physically counted over a 100 banners. I discovered not only small businesses using banners, I discovered major corporations such as Mc Donald's, Blockbuster Video, Pep Boys, Albertsons, Firestone and so many more.

I am not suggesting we attempt to reinvent the wheel, but we mirror these major successful corporations as flagships and examples as to the effectiveness of banners. Banners enable companies to affordably and quickly change their promotions as needed without the tremendous expense of new signage.



## Estimated revenues for the City of Carson

Please note: These estimates are based on very conservative figures.

- 300 to 500 businesses with banners – Conservative estimate 300
- Fee range from \$25 to \$100 month– Conservative average fee \$50 per business
- Low estimate of 300 businesses participating in “Banner Program”

**\*300 businesses x \$50 monthly fee = \$15,000 x 12 months = \$180,000 of additional revenue for the City of Carson.**

Using my business, 3 Suits for \$129 as a very conservative example; the banner attracts conservatively 4 new customers per day. My average sales transaction is \$200 per customer.

- $4 \times \$200 = \$800$  of taxable sales
- $\$800 \times 30 \text{ days} = \$24,000$  of taxable sales
- $\$24,000 \times 12 \text{ months} = \$288,000$

**\*\*\$288,000 x 300 businesses = \$86,400,000 dollars of taxable sales for the City of Carson**

