

BRENTWOOD RESIDENTS COALITION

On Friday, August 19, 2011, the Los Angeles City Council voted to approve a Bus Bench Program that includes amending language proposed by Councilmember Bill Rosendahl. This amendment incorporates zoning restrictions into the proposed Bus Bench contract.

The Bus Bench Program authorizes the placement of thousands of new bus benches with commercial advertising throughout the City. The Brentwood Residents Coalition (BRC), concerned that the proposal might allow Bus Bench advertisements in areas where zoning regulations preclude such commercial advertising, initiated a community outreach campaign. The BRC sought widespread public support for an amendment to the proposed Bus Bench contract that would preclude the installation of commercial ads on benches in areas that prohibit or restrict such advertising.

We appreciate the leadership of Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, who made the motion to amend “the proposed contract to require that new bus benches with advertising be installed in a manner that is consistent with all local zoning codes, including restrictions on off-site advertising set forth in the General Plan, Community Plans, Specific Plans as enacted by ordinance, the California Coastal Act, and all other applicable law.”

The City Council passed the Bus Bench Ordinance with the Rosendahl Amendment by a vote of 11-1.

This victory would not have been possible without the support of the many community organizations whose representatives testified along with the Brentwood Residents Coalition in favor of the Rosendahl Motion at the City Council hearing:

The Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight, the Coastal Law Enforcement Action Network (CLEAN), the Westwood, Brentwood and Pacific Palisades Community Councils, the Studio City Neighborhood Council, the Westwood Village Business Association, the Bel Air Skycrest Property Owners’ Association, the Brentwood Homeowners Association, the Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd. Homeowners Association, the Westwood Homeowners Association, the North Westwood Village Residents Association, the Tract 7260 Association, and the Pacific Palisades Residents Association.

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The Rosendahl Motion amending the Bus Bench contract represents an important first step in controlling the proliferation of Bus Bench advertising in scenic and historic areas. To ensure the efficacy of these protections, we will be reaching out to communities throughout the City to compile a list of areas subject to zoning prohibitions and restrictions on advertising signage, including Scenic Highways, Corridors and Parkways, Specific Plan protected areas, Coastal Zones, Streetscapes, and other areas protected under the law.

But the Bus Bench Program is far from the only advertising-related ordinance on the City's agenda. The proposed City-Wide Sign Ordinance and the Sign Banner Program threaten to bring additional commercial blight into scenic and historic areas, despite zoning prohibitions on such signage. These proposals, supported by well-funded and influential commercial interests, will again challenge the community's resolve, resources and abilities.

The BRC stands ready to work with the coalition of community organizations to protect the City's scenic and historic areas from the impending threat of commercial blight.

Your Participation Is Needed

On **Tuesday, October 18, 2011, at 2 PM**, the City Council's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee will consider the proposed City-Wide Sign Ordinance. This is the most significant and potentially destructive "billboard" ordinance that the City has considered in many years. The proposed Ordinance, as currently drafted, has serious flaws that threaten a dramatic spread of commercial blight throughout the City. The community must join together in proposing critical changes to this Ordinance. The BRC will distribute further information on this Ordinance as the October 18th hearing date approaches.

Thank you,

Brentwood Residents Coalition