

Tacoma Billboard Community Working Group

Meeting 9

Monday, January 12, 2015, 4:00-6:00 P.M
Center for Urban Waters, 326 East D Street

MEETING SUMMARY

(as approved by CWG on January 26)

Working Group Members Attending:					
Tricia DeOme	X	Jill Jensen	X	Doug Schafer	X
Dale Cope		Eric Jackson	X	Ray Velkers	X
Nick Fediay	X	Mike Luinstra	X	Steve Wamback	X
Rusty George	X	Evette Mason		Sharon Winters	X
Pete Grignon	X	Rose Mednick	X	John Thurlow	X
Pam Guinn	X	Dale Reed	X		
Working Group Member Alternates Attending (* -- in audience):					
<i>*Dalton Gittens</i>		<i>*Peter Wangoe</i>	X	<i>*Al Ralston</i>	X
City Representatives, Staff, & Support Team Attending:					
Brian Boudet	X	Karen Reed	X	John Harrington	X
John Griffith	X	Michelle Regan		Elliott Fitzgerald	X

The meeting convened at 4:08. Facilitator Karen Reed welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

The group reviewed the minutes. Tricia DeOme requested a correction to the last paragraph on the first page and Doug Schafer requested a correction for the sixth paragraph on the second page. *The minutes were approved as amended.*

John Harrington provided an overview of billboard takedowns over the years; by the City’s count, the total billboard count in the City has been reduced since 2007 by 26.3%. John then moved on to a discussion of the various buffer distances. He showed photos that demonstrate the visibility of billboards at distances of 100 and 250 feet to illustrate the potential impact of buffers. He display a computer generated map showing the available area for billboards if a 500 foot buffer were employed; it showed that with 500 ft. buffers, billboards are largely precluded. He next showed a map with a hypothetical 250 foot buffer; this size of buffers opens up some areas of downtown Tacoma for billboards and additional small areas began to appear. A third map showed the available area that would result from a 100 foot buffer; more area becomes available at this level, including sections of 6th Ave. John also reviewed the four size differences of billboards—junior poster, poster, premier and bulletin.

Doug Schafer asked if the buffers included churches and if there was a code definition for churches. He expressed concern that churches have too broad of a definition. John responded that churches were included in the items that the buffers were based on.

Mike Luinstra commented that he wasn’t seeing an observable change in available area as buffers shrink. Mr. Harrington went back through the maps and demonstrated that additional areas including parts of 6th Avenue become available with the 100 foot buffer.

Nick Fediay expressed concern about the buffer maps lacking clarity and requested that a map showing a 50 foot buffer be made available.

Karen Reed reviewed the handouts for the meeting and recapped where they are in the process. She moved on to explain some simple “spider” diagrams for use today in the discussion of the design and other factors for billboards. The diagrams group the “billboards allowed zones” into four categories: Industrial, Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Downtown zones, so that code conditions can be considered comprehensively with respect to each zoning category.

Karen asked whether the group was willing to amend their rules to allow Jill Jensen two votes for the meeting due to Scenic Tacoma lacking full representation. The initial vote was 8 to 7 to allow. Co-chairs Wamback and DeOme agreed to allow it. There was some discussion on whether the charter permitted the change; Karen noted the group is able to amend its charter if it wants. Steve Wamback commented that his vote to allow the temporary change came with the expectation groups would be at full strength for the final meeting or forfeit their votes. It was suggested that instead of two votes for Jill that Dale Cope should be asked to fill out the votes later as homework. Tricia DeOme decided to withdraw her vote, reasoning that it was not fair. Steve Wamback requested a revote and the group voted 8 to 5 against allowing the change. Input of missing CWG members will be sought through follow up homework.

Karen Reed reviewed the discussion on design factors from the last meeting. She noted the two subgroups had made very similar recommendations. Tricia DeOme made a correction to a section, noting that her group was split on whether to allow billboards on the same parcels as onsite signage. *Karen will make the correction.*

Karen moved on to the spider charts and provided instruction on how the group would be voting on *minimum* buffer sizes they would be comfortable with, from 500 to 50 feet. She also noted that they would be voting on whether it would make a difference to them if the billboards had additional restrictions on when they could be illuminated.

Ray Velkers asked what all of the votes would mean when they were done and commented that he didn’t want waste time if it meant that the end result would be decreasing the buffers to 250 feet and only legalizing a small number of the total existing billboards. Karen Reed recognized that adjusting the buffers down to 250 wouldn’t legalize many of the existing billboards, unless other changes were made as well. Brian Boudet commented that the work group was not purely about making the existing billboards legal but also providing areas to relocate to.

Doug Schafer added that they shouldn’t be focusing on a number of faces as a goal, since the numbers have not been historically reliable.

Nick Fediay commented that they were there to reach an acceptable compromise and that if a 100 foot buffer was agreed to Clear Channel would only get 54 faces and would simply take the city to court. Clear Channel would not be open to relocating a huge number of billboards. Karen responded that the best option was to find a tolerable compromise for all sides.

Tricia DeOme noted that the settlement between Clear Channel and the City agrees that there will be some relocation. The purpose of the group was to consolidate the existing billboards to areas where they are desired and appropriate.

Eric Jackson commented that the exercise would be helpful in getting the group to consider alternatives.

Steve Wamback requested adding zero to the options for buffering distances and also an option for no dispersal requirement.

Karen Reed moved into the votes on the requirements for the four zoning group categories. The group worked through votes on the following issues:

Buffers

What is the Minimum size of a buffer that CWG members would support between billboards in each “Billboards Allowed” category and other zones/uses, specifically:

- R-Zones
- Other “No Billboard Zones” (DR, RCX, NRX, URX, HMX, Shoreline Zones; and VSD, HIST and CONS overlay zones)
- Special Uses. In current code, these include: schools, churches, public open space, playgrounds, parks, historic and conservation districts, registered historic properties.
- In each case, buffers of 500 ft., 300 ft., 250 ft. 100 ft. 50 ft. and 0 ft. were considered.

The group votes were recorded; they ranged from 300 ft. to 0 ft.

Dispersal

How much distance should be required between billboards in each zone category of zones?

- Dispersal requirements of 500 ft. 400 ft., 300 ft., 200 ft., 100 ft., 50 ft. and 0 ft. were considered
- Would smaller dispersal requirements be acceptable if billboards were not allowed within 300 ft. of an intersection?

Group votes recorded ranged from 400 ft. to 0 ft.

Lighting

In this category, the group considered a proposal from Erick Jackson: *Allow regulated digital billboards in “Billboard Allowed” Zones, so long as the display doesn’t flash or spin and brightness is controlled to something less than that allowed for static billboards.* Jill Jenson stated she was participating in the group understanding that digital would not be discussed. Karen clarified that Clear Channel agreed not to put the digital issue on the table and Clear Channel has agreed that digital signs are not a necessary component of a solution. Based on this commitment, Karen asked that the Clear Channel representatives not vote on the digital billboards issue. The remaining group members voted to recommend against allowing digital billboards, votes ranging from 9-4 against to 10-3 against.

Size

What is the maximum size of billboard that should be allowed in each “Billboards Allowed” category? Options considered included **300 sq. ft.** (current code, roughly consistent with what the billboard industry refers to as “Poster size”); **378 sq. ft.** (“Premier Size”), and **672 sq. ft.** (“Bulletin Size”). The group agreed to support bulletin size signs in industrial areas; the votes were fairly evenly split on the 3 sizes in all other zones.

Height

What is the maximum height of billboards (including structure) that should be allowed in each “Billboards Allowed Category”? Options considered include **30 ft.** (current code); **35 feet** (prior code); and at the suggestion of a CWG member, **greater than 35 feet** (only permitted under current code in the PMI zone). The votes were fairly evenly split on the 3 heights.

Wall signs: the group supported wall signs in downtown zones, subject to them not covering windows or architectural features, but several members would only support wall signs with size and height limits.

Karen will write up the detailed vote tally and reach out to Dale Cope to vote on the issues as well. The votes will be discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 5:41.

Attachment A: Vote Tally of Question 2 Exercise from Meeting 9 (excludes votes from two absent members whose votes were later acquired and tallied for purposes of analysis in the final CWG Report)

Vote Tally on Question 2: What Should Billboards Look Like (Design and Other Factors)

With 15 votes present at the meeting:
60% Recommendation level = 9 votes; 80% consensus level = 12 votes

Asterisked items (*) reflect a vote adjustment to correct erroneous double counting at meeting. The vote on these items has been reduced by 1 as compared to the poster charts recorded at the meeting.

INDUSTRIAL ZONES: M-1, M-2, PMI¹

BUFFERS						
Minimum size of a buffer that CWG members would support between billboards in Industrial Zones and other zones/uses. (Numbers indicate # of CWG Members voting on a minimum acceptable size)						
Size of proposed buffer	R-Zone Buffers		Other “No Billboard” Zone buffers ²		Special Use Buffers ³	
	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
500 feet	0		0		0	
300 feet	5*		5*		5	
250 feet	0		1		1	
100 feet	6		3		3	
50 feet	4		2		2	
0 feet	0		4		4	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>		<i>15</i>		<i>15</i>	

¹ The CWG has consensus support to allow billboards in these zones.

² Other “No Billboard Zones” include DR, RCX, NRX, URX, HMX, Shoreline Zones; and VSD, HIST and CONS overlay zones. There was no consensus on whether NRX, C-1 and T should be “no Billboard zones” or allow billboards.

³ Special Uses include those defined in current code: schools, churches, public open space, playgrounds, parks, historic and conservation districts, registered historic properties.

DISPERSAL		
Feet of dispersal required between BB in Industrial zones	Mtg 9 Votes	
500	0	
400	0	
300	1	
200	6*	
100	6	
50	1	
0	1	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

Additional votes on Dispersal:

Would you support smaller dispersal requirement if there was also a requirement that no BB be located w/in 300 ft. of an intersection? *Consensus: no.*

SIZE		
Maximum size of BB that should be allowed in Industrial zones	CWG Votes	
300 sq. ft. (current code)	4*	
378 sq. ft. ("Premier Size")	0	
672 sq. ft. ("Bulletin Size")	11	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

LIGHTING**Should Lighting Requirements be modified in Industrial Zones?**

Proposal offered by CWG member (not CCO): Allow regulated digital billboards in Industrial Zones, so long as the display doesn't flash or spin and brightness is controlled to something less than that allowed for static billboards.

*Since Clear Channel has agreed not to place digital BB on the table, their reps did not vote on this issue. (leaving 13/15 CWG members voting)

	Mtg 9 Votes	
Support proposal:	4	
Do not support proposal:	9	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>13</i>	

HEIGHT

Maximum BB Height supported in Industrial Zones	Mtg 9 Votes	
30 feet	4	
35 feet	6	
>35 feet	5	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

Note: Current code: M-1, M-2: 30 ft.; PMI – 45 ft.

MIXED USE ZONES: CCX, UCX, CIX⁴

BUFFERS						
Minimum size of a buffer that CWG members would support between billboards in these 3 Mixed Use Zones and other zones/uses. (Numbers indicate # of CWG Members voting on a minimum size at each level)						
Size of proposed buffer	R-Zone Buffers <i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		Other “No Billboard” Zone buffers ⁵ <i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		Special Use Buffers ⁶ <i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
500 ft.	0	0	0	0	0	0
300 feet	5*	5	6*	6	4*	4
250 feet	1	1	1	1	1	1
100 feet	6	6	5	5	3	3
50 feet	3	3	3	3	3	3
0 feet	0	0	0	0	4	4
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>

DISPERSAL					
Feet of dispersal required between BB in these Mixed Use Zones	UCX, CCX <i>Mtg 9</i>		CIX <i>Mtg 9</i>		Additional votes on Dispersal: Would you support smaller dispersal if there was also a requirement that no billboard be located w/in 300 ft. of an intersection? <i>Consensus: no</i>
500 feet	0	0	0	0	
400 feet	4	4	0	0	
300 feet	2	2	3	3	
200 feet	0	0	5*	5	

⁴ The CWG has consensus support to allow billboards in these three mixed use zones.

⁵ Other “No Billboard Zones” include DR, RCX, NRX, URX, HMX, Shoreline Zones; and VSD, HIST and CONS overlay zones. There was no consensus on whether NRX, C-1 and T should be “no Billboard zones”.

⁶ Special Uses include those defined in current code: schools, churches, public open space, playgrounds, parks, historic and conservation districts, registered historic properties.

100 feet	8		6	
50 feet	0		0	
0	1		1	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>		<i>15</i>	

SIZE			
Maximum size of BB that should be allowed in these Mixed Use Zones	Mtg 9 Votes		
300 sq. ft. (current code)	5*		
378 sq. ft. ("Premier Size")	2		
672 sq. ft. ("Bulletin Size")	8		
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>		

LIGHTING			
Should Lighting Requirements be modified in these Mixed Use Zones?			
<i>Proposal offered by CWG member (not CCO): Allow regulated digital billboards in these Mixed Use Zones, so long as the display doesn't flash or spin and brightness is controlled to something less than that allowed for static billboards.</i>			
<i>*Since Clear Channel has agreed not to place digital BB on the table, their reps did not vote on this issue. (leaving 13/ 15 CWG members voting)</i>			
	Mtg 9 Votes		
Support proposal:	4		
Do not support:	9		
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>13</i>		

HEIGHT			
Maximum Height supported in these Zones	Mtg 9 Votes		
30 feet (current code)	5		

35 feet	5	
>35 feet	5	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

COMMERCIAL ZONES: C-2, PDB⁷

BUFFERS						
Minimum size of a buffer that CWG members would support between BB in these Commercial Zones and other zones/uses. (Numbers indicate # of CWG Members voting on a minimum size at each level)						
Size of proposed buffer	R-Zone Buffers		Other “No Billboard” Zone buffers ⁸		Special Use Buffers ⁹	
	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
500 feet	0		0		0	
300 feet	5*		5*		4*	
250 feet	2		2		1	
100 feet	3		3		4	
50 feet	5		5		1	
0 feet	0		0		5	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>		<i>15</i>		<i>15</i>	

⁷ The CWG has consensus support to all BB in these zones.

⁸ Other “No Billboard Zones” include DR, RCX, NRX, URX, HMX, Shoreline Zones; and VSD, HIST and CONS overlay zones. There was no consensus on whether NRX, C-1 and T should be “no Billboard zones”.

⁹ Special Uses include those defined in current code: schools, churches, public open space, playgrounds, parks, historic and conservation districts, registered historic properties.

DISPERSAL			
Feet of dispersal required between BB	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		Additional votes on Dispersal: Would you support smaller dispersal if there was also a requirement that no billboards be located w/in 300 ft. of an intersection? <i>Consensus: no.</i>
500	0		
400	5*		
300	1		
200	1		
100	7		
50	0		
0	1		
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>		

SIZE			
Maximum size of BB that should be allowed in these Commercial zones	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		
300 sq. ft. (current code)	5*		
378 sq. ft. ("Premier Size")	1		
672 sq. ft. ("Bulletin Size")	9		
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>		

LIGHTING		
Should Lighting Requirements be modified in Commercial Zones C-2, PDB?		
<i>Proposal offered by CWG member (not CCO): Allow regulated digital billboards in these zones, so long as the display doesn't flash or spin and brightness is controlled to something less than that allowed for static billboards.</i>		
Since Clear Channel has agreed not to place digital BB on the table, their reps did not vote on this issue. (leaving 13/ 15 CWG members voting)		
	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
Support proposal:	4	
Do not support proposal:	9	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>13</i>	

HEIGHT		
Maximum BB Height supported in C-2, PDB	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
30 feet	5	
35 feet	4	
>35 feet	6	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

DOWNTOWN ZONES: DCC, DMU, WR¹⁰

BUFFERS						
Minimum size of a buffer that CWG members would support between BB in these Downtown Zones and other zones/uses. (Numbers indicate # of CWG Members voting on a minimum size at each level)						
Size of proposed buffer	R-Zone Buffers		Other “No Billboard” Zone buffers ¹¹		Special Use Buffers ¹²	
	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
500 feet	0		0		0	
300 feet	7		6		5	
250 feet	1		2		1	
100 feet	4		4		3	
50 feet	3		3		1	
0 feet	0		0		5	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>		<i>15</i>		<i>15</i>	

DISPERSAL			
Feet of dispersal required between billboards	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>		Additional votes on Dispersal:
500	5		Would you support smaller dispersal if there was also a requirement that no BB be located w/in 300 ft. of an intersection? <i>Consensus: no.</i>
400	1		
300	1		
200	1		
100	3		

¹⁰ The CWG has consensus support to all BB in these zones.

¹¹ Other “No Billboard Zones” include DR, RCX, NRX, URX, HMX, Shoreline Zones; and VSD, HIST and CONS overlay zones. There was no consensus on whether NRX, C-1 and T should be “no Billboard zones”.

¹² Special Uses include those defined in current code: schools, churches, public open space, playgrounds, parks, historic and conservation districts, registered historic properties.

50	3	
0	1	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

SIZE		
Maximum size of BB that should be allowed in these Downtown Zones	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
300 sq. ft. (current code)	9	
378 sq. ft. ("Premier Size")	3	
672 sq. ft. ("Bulletin Size")	3	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

LIGHTING		
Should Lighting Requirements be modified in Industrial Zones?		
<i>Proposal offered by CWG member (not CCO): Allow regulated digital billboards in these Downtown Zones, so long as the display doesn't flash or spin and brightness is controlled to something less than that allowed for static billboards.</i>		
Since Clear Channel has agreed not to place digital BB on the table, their reps did not vote on this issue. (leaving 13/ 15 CWG members voting)		
	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
Support proposal:	3	
Do not support proposal:	10	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>13</i>	

HEIGHT		
Maximum BB Height supported in these Zones	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
30 feet (current code)	6	
35 feet	4	

>35 feet	5	
<i>Total votes</i>	<i>15</i>	

ADDITIONAL VOTES: Wall Signs		
A proposal was offered to allow Wall Signs in these downtown zones, subject to restriction that they not cover windows or architectural features.		
	<i>Mtg 9 Votes</i>	
Yes, allow wall signs in downtown	12	
Yes, but only if they do not exceed 300 sq. ft.	1	
Yes, but only if they do not exceed 300 sq. ft. and are part of an exchange program—some other BB would be removed in the same zone before a wall sign could be installed.	2	