

**BILLBOARD STAKEHOLDERS GROUP**  
**Minutes from May 31, 2006**

***I. Welcome, New Introductions, and Reminders***

Sandra Montgomery welcomed the group to the fourth stakeholder meeting to review and explore possible changes to the existing Outdoor Advertising Regulations. She asked the new members to introduce themselves.

***II. Billboard Mapping Information***

Krista Neilson summarized the data collected from Adams and Lamar regarding billboard structures and sign faces. Adams has 404 billboards within Charlotte and its extra-territorial jurisdiction and Lamar has 21. The map showed the distribution of existing billboards along various routes. The predominant corridors were I-85, I-7, South Boulevard, Independence, Brookshire, Wilkinson, N. Tryon.

Using GIS data, initial analysis suggests that Adams has 275 billboard structures with at least one non-conformity, and Lamar has 13. These include billboards whose sign face is larger or higher than that permitted currently; billboards that don't meet current separation distances; or billboards located in a zoning district where billboards are not currently permitted. A chart summarizing this information was provided.

***III. Brief Summary of Adams and Lamar's Proposals***

Sandra Montgomery summarized the proposals from Adams and Lamar:

**Lamar:**

Allow digital, LED, changeable copy (minimum of 8 seconds per ad) and tri-vision billboards as per NCDOT regulations.

- Convert existing stock
- Lamar is willing to donate public service announcements, amber alerts, or ads for upcoming current events.

**Adams:**

Reduce clutter and improve visual quality by:

- Removing legal, non-conforming billboards in cluttered areas
- Removing legal, non-conforming billboards that are too large
- Removing billboards obstructed by vegetation

Deposit the removed square footage into a "bank" to be withdrawn by the depositing company and used on a 1:1 basis at a new location:

- Uptown in the form of Wallscape billboards (painted, vinyl, or LED)
  - Adams proposes capping the total number of wallscape to reduce clutter.
  - Adams proposes 15% text limit on wallscape to preserve aesthetic quality
- Adams proposes locating wallscape on parking decks, buildings

- Adams is willing to donate a percentage of new advertising space Uptown for upcoming events.
- I-485 exit ramp areas in the form of new billboards allowed in an Overlay District

**IV. Discussion of Proposals and Possible Changes in Response. What can Stakeholders Support?**

Sandra Montgomery began the discussion by noting that the ideas generated by the outdoor advertisers fell into four basic categories: Digital, LED, Tri-Vision New Technology; Wallscapes Uptown; Billboards at I-485 Interchanges; and Non-Conforming Billboard Banking.

Before discussion began, she pointed out some of the stakeholders had held their own meeting to discuss their ideas, and that she had been asked to attend for informational purposes, which she did. Sandra noted that one stakeholder, Delores Dixon, was unable to attend this meeting, but copies of her comments and opinions were distributed to everyone along with the Agenda.

Rodger Lentz then opened the discussion to get a broad overview of what the stakeholders thought of the proposals. At this stage of the discussion, staff is looking to gain some idea of the direction the stakeholders want to do in. We are not looking to determine the details at this stage, but rather assess whether certain proposals should be investigated by staff further. These ideas would be captured by staff, and used to give direction to the group.

A roundtable of ideas were captured below, with a rough estimate of the support shown in parentheses:

New Technology (Digital, LED, Tri-vision):

- Acceptable, but with limitations or conditions (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable, but only with trading non-conforming structures to remove clutter (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable, but with greater separation distances (60% for; 40% against)
- Acceptable, but only billboards that are currently conforming can use the new technology (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable, but with public service announcements required (this is not an area where the City has authority to require)
- Acceptable, but only billboards on federal aid, primary highways can convert (5% for; 90% against)
- New technology acceptable on any billboard, whether it is conforming or non-conforming (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable on any billboard, with conditions, and if the non-conforming situation is remedied (60% for; 40% against)
- Acceptable if the interval of each static image is longer (40% in favor; 60% against)
- Tri-Visions are acceptable (75% for; 25% against)

### Wallsapes Uptown:

- Acceptable (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable only if trade square footage of billboards currently allowed Uptown (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable for any company, with no trading involved (40% for; 60% against)
- Acceptable, but only with Design Review Board process that included neighborhood control (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable only in the Uptown core area, and in entertainment areas, but not in residential areas (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable with limitations (numbers, location, spacing, height, dimming) (60% for; 40% against)
- Center City Partners should have input in this decision.

### I-485 Exit Ramp Areas:

- Acceptable only at interchanges, but no trading of existing billboards to allow other companies the same right (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable at interchanges, but must trade a non-conforming billboard at a “bad location” for a new billboard (50% for; 50% against)
- Acceptable only at business interchanges, not residential (50% for; 50% against)

### Billboard Banking:

- Billboard bank deposits could be sold or won in a lottery
- Billboard banking could be used to trade the amount of advertisers that can be located on an LED billboard – remove the same amount of advertising signs from nonconforming locations. The ratio would be worked out later.
- Billboard bank deposits of non-conforming square footage could be used to upgrade another non-conforming billboard (40% for; 60% against)

### Billboard Structure:

- Allow non-conforming billboards that are non-conforming with respect to supports to be upgraded
- Remove one non-conforming billboard structure in order to upgrade another non-conforming structure.

In the time remaining, Rodger asked the stakeholders to rank, from 1 to 5, their priority of which non-conforming situation was most important to them indicated with a “1”, and which was least important indicated with a “5”. The results are displayed in order of most important to least important, based on scores:

#### Billboards that are less than 400’ from residential/institutional districts

4, 3, 1, 3, 1, 1, 1, 5, 2 =  $21/9 = 2.333$  average

#### Billboards that are less than 500’ from another sign

2, 2, 4, 4, 2, 1, 3 =  $18/7 = 2.571$  average

#### Billboards that exceed the height limitation

2, 1, 5, 2, 3, 3, 3, 5 =  $24/8 = 3.0$  average  
Billboards whose sign face is larger than 380 square feet  
1, 5, 4, 1, 2, 4, 2, 6 =  $25/8 = 3.125$  average

Billboards that are less than 20' from an existing building  
3, 6, 3, 5, 5, 5, 6, 4 =  $37/8 = 4.625$  average

Billboards that are less than 500' from any principal use being advertised  
5, =  $5/1 = 5$  average

Billboards within 300' of any right-of-way on the same side of the road that are less than 1000' apart from another billboard, regardless of orientation of the billboard to the street  
6, 4, 6, 6, 6, 6, 4, 6 =  $44/8 = 5.5$  average

## V. *Next Steps*

Rodger summarized that the staff will take the information gained this evening and meet with the City Attorneys to determine what options can be pursued from a legal standpoint. Based on the outcome, staff will begin developing some alternatives for further stakeholder review and comment.

Rodger thanked everyone for coming and reminded stakeholders to start thinking about the details of what would be acceptable to each person with regards to billboards and to bring those comments to the next meeting.

## VI. *Next Meeting*

Sandra noted that the stakeholders will most likely not meet for the next 3-4 weeks. She will let everyone know when the meetings will resume.