

FISCAL NOTE FOR NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS

Department:	Contact Person/Phone:	CBO Analyst/Phone:
Department of Planning and Development (DPD) & Legislative Department	Mike Podowski / 6-1988 Sara Belz / 4-5382	Not Applicable

Legislation Title:

AN ORDINANCE relating to the regulation of wall signs, amending Sections 23.55.030, 23.55.034, 23.55.036, 23.84A.036 and 23.90.018 of the Seattle Municipal Code; enacting and amending standards for on-premises wall signs in commercial, Seattle Mixed, industrial and downtown zones; clarifying the definition of wall signs and on-premises signs; directing revenue from sign code violations to the Operations Division of the Department of Planning and Development; and establishing increased penalties for certain violations of sign provisions in the Seattle Municipal Code.

Summary of the Legislation:

The ordinance would make the following changes to the Land Use Code (Title 23 of the Seattle Municipal Code):

- Provide a 672-square foot area limit for on-premises wall signs in commercial, Seattle Mixed, industrial and downtown zones;
- Establish a 3,000 square foot area limit for all new on-premises wall signs for spectator sports facilities that have a seating capacity of 40,000 or greater and are located in industrial zones;
- Clarify definitions of wall signs and on-premises signs; and
- Increase penalties for violations of certain sign provisions addressed in the legislation from \$500/day to \$1,500/day.

Background:

The City generally bans all signs, including off-premises signs (also known as advertising signs or billboards), because they contribute to driver distraction and visual blight. However, the City makes some exceptions to advance other purposes, such as allowing on-premises business signs to promote local business vitality. Currently, there are no size/area limits for on-premises signs in commercial, Seattle Mixed, industrial and downtown zones. Over the last few years, the City has seen an increase in the number of very large on-premises wall signs located in these areas, some of which far exceed the size of large billboards (672 square feet) and some of which appear more like off-premises advertising signs than on-premises signs.

The intent of this legislation is to improve the consistency of the Land Use Code by 1) clarifying and restoring the distinction between on-premises and off-premises signage, and 2) adopting area limits for new wall signs that will reduce driver distraction and visual blight more than the current Code, which does not contain an area limit, all while continuing to allow businesses to communicate with the public via on-premises signage. The proposed legislation would also increase the maximum penalties for violations of certain sign provisions in the Land Use Code. DPD prepared a Director's Report at the request of Council related to the proposed amendments; the Director's Report can be found in Clerk File 313374.

Please check one of the following:

This legislation does not have any financial implications.

This legislation has financial implications.

Other Implications:

- a) **Does the legislation have indirect financial implications, or long-term implications?**
Over time, it is possible the legislation could have some impact on the amount of penalty payments DPD receives from parties that violate the City's on-premises sign regulations. It may also have an effect on the amount of revenue DPD generates from issuing on-premises sign permits because permit fees are based in part on a sign's size. The scale of those potential impacts are not currently known.
- b) **What is the financial cost of not implementing the legislation?**
See above.
- c) **Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?**
No.
- d) **What are the possible alternatives to the legislation that could achieve the same or similar objectives?** There are no other possible alternatives that could achieve the same or similar objectives. Legislative action by ordinance is required to amend the City's Land Use Code.
- e) **Is a public hearing required for this legislation?**
Yes, a public hearing was held on February 20, 2014.
- f) **Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?**
Yes.
- g) **Does this legislation affect a piece of property?**
No.

h) Other Issues:

None.

List attachments to the fiscal note below:

None.