

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Emil R. Moncivais, AICP, AIA, Director, Planning Department
Florencio Pena, Director, Development Services Department

THROUGH: Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

COPY: Jelynn LeBlanc Burley, Assistant City Manager, Christopher Brady, Assistant City Manager, File

SUBJECT: Resolution in support of SB 512 and HB 994 prohibiting new billboards statewide; in support of SB 511 and HB 1039 to establish a National Scenic Byways Program in Texas; and to encourage TxDOT to increase its current expenditures for native landscaping.

DATE: April 21, 2003

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On April 20, 2003, a City Council six-signature memorandum directed staff to initiate a resolution in support of legislation to ban billboards statewide, to support participation by the state of Texas in the National Scenic Byways program, and to encourage the Texas Department of Transportation to increase its current expenditures for native landscaping. Staff recommends approval.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Scenic Texas, Inc., is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the state's visual environment. Scenic Texas seeks and supports public policies, at all levels of government, which promote scenic conservation and beautification and which limit actions that are harmful to the visual environment. The Scenic Texas, San Antonio chapter has invited City Council to consider a resolution in support of three statewide efforts.

- 1) SB 512 and companion HB 994 would prohibit the construction of billboards along highways and streets in Texas. Although this proposed legislation targets rural and unincorporated areas, it provides that existing billboards may be relocated to a location in a municipality's corporate limits or ETJ upon approval of the governing body of the new site.
- 2) SB 511 and companion HB 1039 would provide for a National Scenic Byways program in Texas. The National Scenic Byways program provides federal funds to designated National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. The National Scenic Byways (NSB) Program was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, and reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Under the program, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. There are 72 such designated byways in 32 states. The Federal Highway Administration promotes the collection

as America's Byways. Discretionary funding is available to designated scenic byways for visitor's centers, brochures, way-side interpretation and other promotional projects. Currently, Texas has no National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads.

- 3) The Texas Department of Transportation is encouraged to increase its current expenditures for landscaping using low maintenance native and adaptive non-invasive plant materials. This effort would enhance the natural beauty and appeal of the state's roads and highways and protect the distinctive character of the visual environment. Two recent examples of this type of effort by TxDOT are the Landscape and Aesthetics Plan for Kelly Parkway that supported context sensitive design and landscaping with native plantings, and the Wurzbach Parkway construction. These types of efforts would promote good highway design and an aesthetically pleasing environment.

POLICY ANALYSIS

According to Scenic, Texas, approximately 330,000 billboards exist today in Texas. In an effort to curtail the proliferation of billboards statewide, many large municipalities, including Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and McAllen have adopted resolutions in support of the proposed legislation. Other smaller municipalities supporting the legislation include Allen, Blanco, Deer Park, Dripping Springs, Elgin, Fredericksburg, Hedwig Village, Helotes, Lakeway, Richmond, Uvalde, and West Lake Hills.

Currently, 1,908 billboards are located in the City of San Antonio and its ETJ. This number has been reduced from 2,243 billboards identified in 1986. The city prohibits billboards in its designated Scenic Corridors. The purpose of Scenic Corridor Districts is to promote attractive corridors along the city's major thoroughfares in a way that reduced visual blight from billboards. As a management tool for new growth, the scenic corridors can protect capital projects and other public investments and promote a quality environment that would assist in strengthening the economy of the city.

Section 28-141 provides that scenic corridors serve to preserve natural surroundings, thereby enhancing the aesthetic environment, reducing visual blight and distraction and further promoting traffic safety. No billboards shall be erected within six hundred and sixty (660) feet of the public right-of-way along a freeway or expressway. Seven scenic corridors are currently designated. An eighth scenic corridor for the Southside Initiative Planning Area and adjacent roadways recently was adopted by City Council on April 17, 2003.

The 1997 *Master Plan* policies call for:

2c-2 Cooperate with other groups to identify and designate the historic routes of the Caminos Reales as a statewide historical and cultural network.

1b-1 Improved design and attractiveness of the City's highway, street, transit and pedestrian networks, and of its open spaces and greenbelts.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

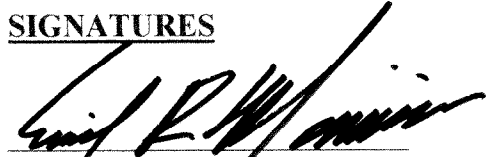
COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the City Manager's Office and City Attorney's Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS

None.

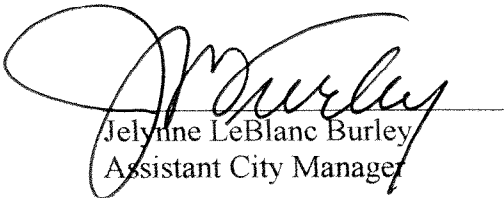
SIGNATURES



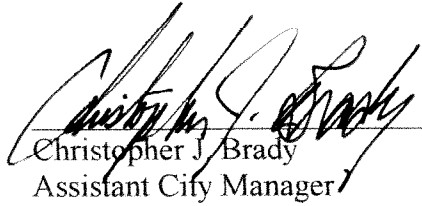
Emil R. Moncivais, AICP, AIA
Director, Planning Department



Florencio Pena
Director, Development Services Department



Jelynn LeBlanc Burley
Assistant City Manager



Christopher J. Brady
Assistant City Manager

Approved:



Terry M. Brechtel
City Manager

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE SHEET

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Councilman Julián Castro, District 7

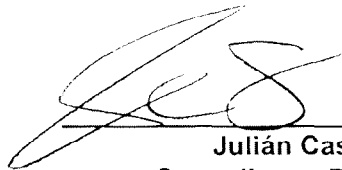
COPIES TO: Terry Brechtel, City Manager; Yolanda Ledesma, Acting City Clerk; Andrew Martin, City Attorney; Emil Moncivais, Director of Planning; Florencio Peña; File

SUBJECT: Scenic Texas Legislation

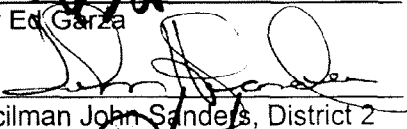
DATE: April 10, 2003

I respectfully request Council concurrence to direct the Planning Director, in coordination with Development Services Director, to bring forward to City Council a resolution in support of SB 512 and HB 994 prohibiting new billboards statewide. The resolution also supports a National Scenic Byways program in Texas to provide additional federal funding for roads that are aesthetically, culturally, archeologically, historically or recreationally significant, and to encourage TxDOT to increase its current expenditures for landscaping using low maintenance native and adaptive non-invasive plant materials.

Your favorable consideration of this matter is appreciated.

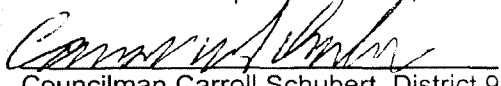

Julián Castro
Councilman, District 7

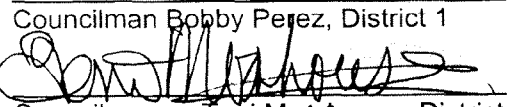

Mayor Ed Garza


Councilman John Sanders, District 2

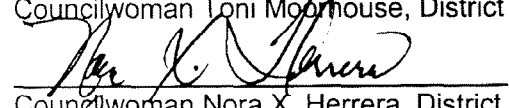

Councilman Enrique Martin, District 4


Councilman Enrique M. Barrera, District 6


Councilman Carroll Schubert, District 9


Councilman Bobby Perez, District 1


Councilwoman Toni Moonhouse, District 3


Councilwoman Nora X. Herrera, District 5


Councilwoman Bonnie Conner, District 8


Councilman David Carpenter, District 10

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DRAFT

Resolution

WHEREAS, the City of _____ has no authority to stop billboards
on the roads that lead into the City but lie outside its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the roads within the state are a public investment; and

WHEREAS, the roads are heavily traveled by tourists and residents who fund the
construction, operation and maintenance of the roads; and

WHEREAS, the roads are heavily traveled by tourists and residents who participate in the
City and the State economy; and

WHEREAS, as a public investment, the roads must be protected; and

WHEREAS, the City and the State economy is dependent on the preservation of the
state's natural beauty; and

WHEREAS, landscaping enhances the aesthetics of public roadways; and

WHEREAS, there are roadways in and near the City that are either aesthetically,
culturally, archeologically, recreationally or historically significant that should
be considered for designation as scenic byways; and

WHEREAS, the region's roadways and their scenery are directly related to the economy
of the City and the rest of the State; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to protect and provide for the general welfare of the traveling
public; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to promote the health, safety, welfare, convenience, and
enjoyment of the public; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to protect the public investment in the state roadways; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to protect and encourage economic development through
tourism; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to preserve and promote the natural beauty of the region
surrounding the City as well as all other state roadways.

THEREFORE, the CITY OF _____ hereby adopts this
resolution to endorse the following legislative proposals:

1. SB 512 and HB 994 - A bill stopping the construction of new billboards statewide;
2. A bill encouraging TxDOT to increase its current expenditures for landscaping using low maintenance native or adaptive non-invasive plant materials; and
3. SB 511 and HB 1039 - A bill allowing a National Scenic Byways Program in Texas that will provide for additional federal funding for roads that are either aesthetically, culturally, archeologically, historically, or recreationally significant.

EACH OF WHICH WILL:

Promote the convenience and enjoyment of the traveling public;

Protect the public investment in the state roadways;

Protect and encourage local and State economic development through tourism;

Preserve and promote the natural beauty of the roadways;

Enhance recreational resources; and

Promote the natural beauty of the state landscape and its regional characteristics.

Dated: _____