

Recommendation related to Item 64 on the January 22, 2026 Austin City Council Agenda, for a public hearing and consideration of an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 25-10 (Sign Regulations) to authorize larger signs in the public right-of-way that include electronic images, lights, and off-premises advertising.

WHEREAS: The proposed ordinance change would allow larger signs in the public right-of-way that include electronic images, lights, and off-premise advertising specifically fifty-eight foot “way finding” kiosks downtown and electronic advertising at bus stops and bike kiosks. The almost universal use of iPhones provides more information than any kiosk. Moreover, Austin’s street scape is already full of distracting and messy elements, and these kiosks certainly will be vandalized.

WHEREAS: The Environmental Commission has not been presented to or asked to comment on City Code Chapter 25-10 amendment authorizing larger signs in the public right-of-way that include electronic images, lights, and off-premises advertising, and;

WHEREAS: The Environmental Commission feels amending the code would undermine the US Supreme Court decision that upheld the City ordinance that prevents advertising companies from digitizing their off-site-billboards.

WHEREAS: This code amendment, that would support 50 signs of 8ft or less, to be dispersed around the downtown area is against the climate and sustainability goals as it would increase the use of energy and carbon footprint and;

WHEREAS: This code amendment will increase light pollution which is in opposition to the Bird City goals of reducing light pollution especially during spring and fall migrations seasons. Light pollution is also detrimental to children’s health and;

WHEREAS: The Environmental Commission feels that these signs are unnecessary given the advancements in smart phone technologies that offer a myriad of wayfinding apps, geofencing and other marketing tools available to the user and businesses and;

WHEREAS: There has been limited public engagement on this code change, including not involving all relevant boards and commissions.

THEREFOR: The Environmental Commission opposes amending Code 25-10 to allow electronic and digitized signage.