



## Alcohol ads not iced at LAX

[BY KELLIE MEJDRICH](#)

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Despite local efforts to block alcohol advertising at Los Angeles International Airport, a city committee opted Tuesday to allow them.

A public call for restrictions on alcohol ads at the city-owned airport surfaced last month, when a comprehensive sign plan for LAX reached the city's planning and land use management committee. But the city attorney recommended not imposing the restriction, according to Nicholas Maricich of the city's planning department during a presentation to council members Tuesday.

Lisa Trifiletti, director of environmental and land use planning for Los Angeles World Airports, told the council that LAX retains control over what signs go up there, and will institute design standards that restrict obscene or indecent advertising.

"We do care deeply about putting in a sign program that would enhance the passenger experience, that would cater to high design quality, and would recognize that LAX is a family environment, where the presence of children can be expected at all times," Trifiletti said.

But the airport already has on-site advertising for alcohol sold at duty-free shops, and "that's something we would like to retain the ability to advertise," Trifiletti said.

Los Angeles World Airports has been working toward a comprehensive plan for billboards at LAX for more than three years, according to city documents. When approved, the new sign district will allow for more than 371,000 square feet of what's known as "off-site signage," advertising products that aren't located on the property where a sign is displayed.

With the new sign district, the city plans to take down more than 23,000 square feet of off-site signs within five years after the first new signs are constructed. It will also funnel \$3.75 million into a LAWA Visual Blight Reduction Trust Fund.

The plan includes more than 38,000 square feet of digital signage, a type of advertising that has been fiercely debated over the years as the city ponders how to regulate billboards. In 2002, the city banned any new off-site signage in the city, but that ban has been loosely enforced and also become the subject of numerous legal challenges.

Because the airport's special sign district was requested in 2011, it will not be subject to the city's proposed sign ordinance currently making its way through the city's planning committee. But a report from Los Angeles World Airports dated Sept. 5 stated that digital billboard standards in the airport sign plan "are consistent with the proposed Citywide Sign Ordinance."

While 1st District Councilman Gil Cedillo said Tuesday he's against the "public advertising of alcohol," he pointed to the airport's 205 permits to sell alcohol.

"While we want to create a family environment at the airport, the fact of the matter is it's not," Cedillo said. "You don't have children walking around without supervision. That's a distinct environment from any other environment that we've talked about, whether a park or a bus stop."

*The move was a disappointment, however, to Ruben Rodriguez, chairman of the Coalition to Ban Alcohol Ads on Public Property in Los Angeles. The group, which includes San Rafael-based nonprofit Alcohol Justice, worked to rid 6,000 city bus benches of alcohol ads in 2011. It's now working to get such ads out of bus shelters.*

*"When people come to L.A., they should get to know the city for its great food, for its culture," he said, "... not for alcohol, not as a party town."*

**Contact the writer:** 323-813-8332 or [kmejdrich@losangelesregister.com](mailto:kmejdrich@losangelesregister.com) and on Twitter: @kelmej

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