



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 2

Agenda Date: January 23, 2024

In Control: Planning and Community Development Committee

DEPARTMENT: Development Services Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Shannon

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and possible action on the proposal to create an Urban Entertainment District in the City of San Antonio by the Development Services Department and the Office of Historic Preservation.

SUMMARY:

Briefing and possible action on the proposal to create an Urban Entertainment District in the City of San Antonio by the Development Services Department and the Office of Historic Preservation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Development Services Department (DSD) staff was approached in January 2022 by members of Outfront Media and the Urban Activation Institute to discuss a proposal for San Antonio to create one or more downtown Art and Entertainment Districts powered by outdoor media platforms. After initial discussions, DSD and the Department of Arts & Culture (DA&C) recommended that the parties present their proposal as part of the 2023 Sign Code Update process in 2022. The intent of the proposal would allow off-premise advertising as part of the Urban Entertainment Districts

and would require changes to the City's sign code (City Code Chapter 28). The main parts of the proposal are summarized below:

- The City would create through ordinance one or more Urban Entertainment Districts that would allow digital platforms/screens to be installed on approved buildings within the district. The proponents used similar programs already established in Denver, CO, Atlanta, GA, and West Hollywood, CA as examples.
- The digital screens would allow approved off-premise advertising (i.e., "digital billboards") that met certain civic and community-approved criteria.
- The program would also require a minimum amount of time allotted for public messaging and approved digital art to be shown on the screens.
- The City would receive a percentage of the revenue that each digital platform would receive which the City could then use for whichever City programs allowed by the approved policy. The proponents estimated that the revenue share for San Antonio will reach \$750,000-\$1,000,000 annually based on comparable efforts around the country. While most of the discussion referenced other cities that used the revenue to support the jurisdictions' Arts programs, the proponents indicated that the City could decide how to use the funds generated.

The 2023 Sign Code Update Stakeholder committee decided to not support the proposal to create these Urban Entertainment Districts due to the fact the committee members felt it was outside of the scope of their committee. They stated that this was a City policy discussion for review especially due to the revenue sharing aspect of the proposal.

The request to create a proposal for an Urban Entertainment District in San Antonio was further discussed at the March 2023 meeting of the Planning and Community Development Committee (PCDC) as part of the 2023 San Antonio Sign Code Update. During that meeting, PCDC members instructed City staff to continue to work with the representatives from Outfront Media and Urban Activation Institute to further review and develop options for this program in San Antonio. City staff has met again with these representatives and is ready to describe the program and a path for San Antonio to review and possibly adopt a pilot program in the City.

ISSUE:

As part of an overall economic development program, cities such as Denver, CO, Atlanta, GA, and West Hollywood, CA have developed Urban Entertainment Districts where enhanced interaction between the streets, sidewalks and public spaces are expressed through permissive sign ordinances that emphasize the unique character of the buildings in an area where large facades and special use buildings such as sports arenas present special opportunities to create and define a "district identity".

The possibility of creating one or more of these districts in San Antonio was discussed during the 2023 San Antonio Sign Code update process with a recommendation from the Sign Code committee for the City to review this via City Council as a policy issue rather than as a simple sign code update.

City staff recommends that the a series of community meetings be conducted to obtain feedback

related to the creation of one or more of these Urban Entertainment Districts in San Antonio including specific locations that should be included and restricted from the creation of such an ordinance. The results of these community meetings as well as a final staff recommendation would then be brought back to PCDC later this year.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with this item at this time.

ALTERNATIVES:

PCDC could vote to not direct City staff to move forward with community meetings to get feedback and to develop final recommendations for a pilot program.

RECOMMENDATION:

City staff recommends that the a series of community meetings be conducted to obtain feedback related to the creation of one or more of these Urban Entertainment Districts in San Antonio including specific locations that should be included and restricted from the creation of such an ordinance. The results of these community meetings as well as a final staff recommendation would then be brought back to PCDC later this year.