



## Advertising Law - February 2015

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### Alcohol Ads Banned in Los Angeles

**Citing an interest in reducing alcohol abuse and underage drinking, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to ban advertisements for all types of alcoholic beverages on public property and buses.**

“Given the number of youth in the City of Los Angeles who are susceptible to alcohol advertising, as well as the general impact of alcohol advertising on alcohol use, the City can play a role in reducing exposure of youth and others to alcohol advertisements by voluntarily prohibiting the advertising of alcoholic beverages on real or personal property, including buses and other vehicles,” according to the new ordinance.

Alcohol ads will not disappear overnight, however, as the new measure excludes current advertising contracts, some with up to six years remaining.

While the ban covers all city-owned and city-controlled property, it exempts city proprietary departments, departments that control their own funds and properties used for “operation of a restaurant, concert, sports or entertainment venue” like the Los Angeles Convention Center, the Los Angeles Zoo, and the Los Angeles International Airport, although they “are strongly encouraged to adopt advertising policies consonant with” the ordinance.

Advertisements intended to communicate the health hazards of alcoholic beverages, that encourage people not to drink alcoholic beverages, or that publicize drug or alcohol treatment or rehabilitation services, are excluded from the advertising ban.

Opponents of the new measure argued that the city would lose revenue, as roughly 20 percent of the space offered by Los Angeles for advertisements featured alcohol-related ads. Supporters, including groups like Women Against Gun Violence and the Asian American Drug Abuse Program, countered that the actual dollar amount was less than 1 percent of the city’s operating revenue and cited a study from the UCLA Center for Alcohol Marketing to Youth which found that alcohol advertising on city-owned property encourages youth alcohol consumption.

To read the new ordinance, click [here](#).

**Why it matters:** City property has become a hot-button area with regard to alcohol advertising. Los Angeles, which previously prohibited alcohol advertisements from bus benches in 2011, follows in the footsteps of cities like Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, which have similar bans on all city property.