



# Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** BL2021-726, **Version:** 1

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An ordinance to amend Title 17 of the Metropolitan Code of Laws, the Zoning Ordinance of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, pertaining to LED message boards and digital display signs. (Proposal No. 2021Z-006TX-001).

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Government, through Chapter 17.32.050 of the Zoning Code restricts the location of LED message boards and digital display signs based, in part, on certain distance and spacing requirements irrespective of the orientation of sign illumination; and

WHEREAS, on April 9, 2021 the Metropolitan Council enacted substitute ordinance BL2020-535 regarding the design and operation of outdoor electrical lighting to achieve light pollution reduction consistent with International Dark Sky Association guidelines, and adopted resolution RS2021-873 recognizing April 5-12, 2021 as International Dark Sky Week in Nashville and Davidson County; and

WHEREAS, technology in the sign industry as to electronic changeable message signs with LED message boards and digital displays has evolved in the last ten (10) years in a manner that can reduce light pollution; and

WHEREAS, digital display signage is permitted in certain non-residential zoning districts; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the Metropolitan Code of Laws be updated pertaining to LED message boards and digital displays to reflect the technological advancements in the sign industry that mitigate light spill.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That Section 17.32.050(G)(2) of the Metropolitan Code of Laws is hereby amended by adding a new subsection c as follows:

- c. The distance requirements in subsections a and b above shall not apply to LED message boards and digital display signs designed with louvers and ambient light sensors that together reduce light spill. LED message boards and digital display signs equipped with this technology shall not have an illumination output that exceeds one-half foot-candle across the boundary of the nearest agricultural-zoned or residential-zoned property.

Section 2. Be it further enacted, that this ordinance take effect immediately after its passage and such change be published in a newspaper of general circulation, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

### Analysis

Under the Metro Code, signs with any copy, graphics, or changing digital displays are not permitted in CA, CA-NA, CS, CS-NS, CF, CF-NS, SCR, SCR-NS, IWD, IR and IG districts unless they adhere to certain distance

requirements. Signs four feet or less in height cannot be less than 100 feet from any agriculturally or residentially zoned property. For each additional foot in height above four feet, the sign must be an additional 25 feet from any agriculturally or residentially zoned property.

This ordinance would exempt LED message boards and digital display signs designed with louvers and ambient light sensors to reduce light spill from these distance requirements. In addition, the LED message boards and digital display boards equipped with this technology could not have an illumination output that exceeds one-half foot-candle across the boundary of the nearest agriculturally-zoned or residentially-zoned property.

This was recommended for an indefinite deferral at the Planning Commission.