



DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS



Proposed Update to Illegal Sign Ordinance

Louisville Metro Code § 112.01 (O-043-26)

**Sponsors: Council Members Reed, Winkler and
Piagentini**

April 14, 2026

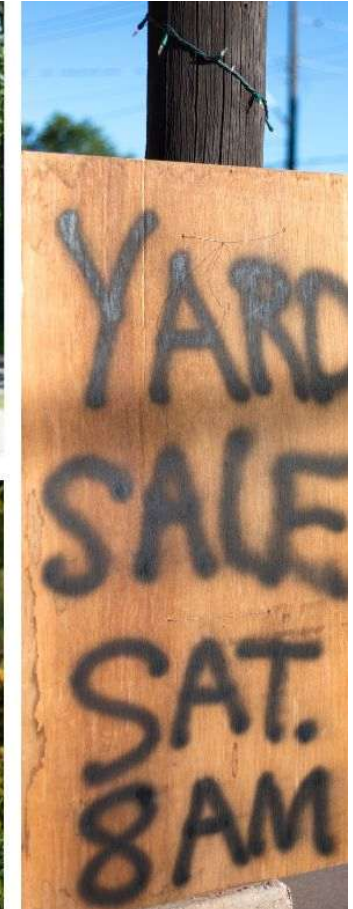
Presenter: Wes Sydnor, Executive Director, Public Works

The problem

Illegal signs are cluttering our community.

- Common examples:
 - Plastic yard signs in medians
 - Signs stapled to utility poles
 - Advertisements at busy intersections

They appear overnight and can multiply quickly.





Why it matters

Illegal signs:

- Create safety hazards (blocked sightlines, distracted drivers)
- Can obstruct drainage ways
- Contribute to litter
- Consume staff time and taxpayer resources
- Violate public right-of-way rules

Current law (criminal classification)

Under Chapter 112:

- Posting signs on public property is a **criminal violation**
- The individual physically posting the sign commits the offense
- Enforcement requires catching the person in the act

Result: Difficult to enforce effectively.





Why change to civil enforcement?

The civil process:

- Is better suited for code violations
- Does not require catching someone in the act
- Allows accountability for those who post or cause signs to be posted
- Focuses on compliance and deterrence

How the proposed civil process works

Violations of § 112.01 would:

- Be classified as a civil offense
- Be enforced through the Code Enforcement Board

Process:

- Notice of Violation (opportunity to correct)
- Citation if not remedied
- Each day of noncompliance = separate violation






How will Enforcement Work?

- Any Member of the Community can Remove Signs and Dispose of them in the Trash/Litter Baskets.
- Public Works Enforcement staff and Inspectors will Document and Remove Illegal Signs.
- Illegal Sign Reporting Options will be Promoted within the 311 App and Routed to Staff for Follow-up.
- Violators will have Enforcement Escalated.



Proposed penalties

- Fine: **\$250 – \$500 per citation**
- Liability for Metro's removal and enforcement costs
- Daily violations if signs remain after notice
- Creates meaningful deterrence compared to current \$10 – \$50 penalties.



How can people legally advertise?

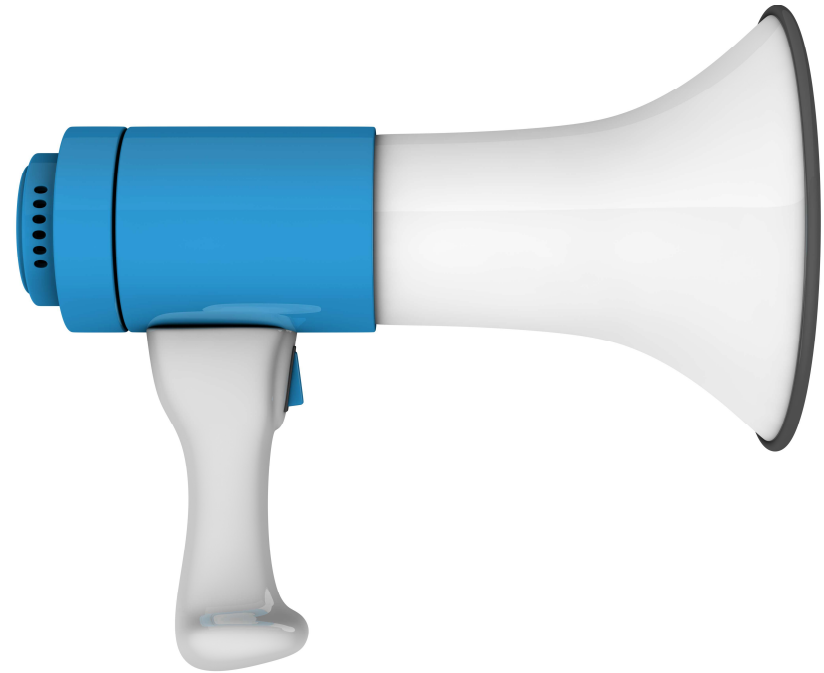
- Paid media ads
- Social media
- Nextdoor
- Mailers
- Signs on private property

Public education and communications plan

To support compliance, we will:

- Participate in a press conference with sponsoring Metro Council members
- Issue a formal press release
- Include education in Metro newsletters
- Share information on social media
- Post in neighborhood platforms (e.g., Nextdoor)
- Educate local printing companies/businesses about the ordinance

Goal: Prevent violations before enforcement is necessary.





Expected outcomes

- Stronger enforcement tool
- Increased voluntary compliance
- Safer intersections and rights of way
- Reduced litter
- Increase effectiveness of permitted public signs
- Clear accountability
- Cleaner, more attractive neighborhoods

Questions?

