



**Committee of 100 on Federal City Calls for
Ban on New Digital Billboards
*Asks Council to Conduct Studies Before Permitting***

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The Committee of 100 (C100) called for a **ban on new, highly intrusive digital billboards in the District** that would be allowed across the city under rules proposed by the District Department of Transportation. DDOT's proposals would allow self-illuminating Jumbotron and projected video screens as large as 1200 square feet with images that change as often as every eight seconds, in new Verizon Center-type "Designated Entertainment Areas" (DEAs) including the area surrounding the Ballpark and the SW Waterfront. Alarming, and with no justification, the proposals would appear to open any District commercial area outside an historic district to variable message billboards and grant sole power to the Mayor to designate additional DEAs.

"DDOT's proposals constitute major, wholly unwarranted and indeed inexplicable concessions to the sign industry at the expense of the public interest," said Meg Maguire of C100. "If allowed, these billboards will blight reviving commercial and mixed-use districts and impose unacceptable hardships on residents and office workers."

In testimony before the DC Council Committee on Transportation and the Environment, Ms. Maguire noted that the Verizon Center/Gallery Place billboards have already demonstrated the negative effects of large, variable message billboards. "Residents and office workers have long complained that these billboards make it difficult to concentrate during the day and hard to sleep at night."

C100 also points out that bans are already in effect in four states and in many localities. Vermont, Alaska, Hawaii and Maine, have long banned the construction of billboards. They are joined by 386 communities in Texas, including Houston, Amarillo, Austin, El Paso, Ft. Worth, Galveston and San Antonio; 287 local governments in Florida; Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and San Jose in California; and Denver and Greeley in Colorado, to name a few.

C100 is requesting the Council to conduct its own impartial, objective study of the effects of the digital billboards on the well-being and property values of residents and office tenants, with particular attention to how they have affected the businesses and homes at Gallery Place/Verizon Center; and requesting DDOT to provide visual simulations showing the implications of the proposed regulations on all parts of the city.

The only way to defend this city from the ravages of the billboard industry as thousands of other far-sighted cities and towns have done around the country is to ban construction of all new billboards in DC.
