

## LOS ANGELES PERMITS ADVERTISING IN ZOO AND CITY PARKS



Antonio Villaraigosa's top advisor urged a city council committee on Monday to pass an ordinance permitting companies to purchase advertising space in the Los Angeles Zoo and the city parks. An attorney for Villaraigosa's office, Brian Currey, made a public appearance in front of the Planning and Land Use Committee, which held a meeting for this issue. Currey made it a point to get across to the board that the city is looking for innovative moneymaking sources for the city. "We are in a very difficult time, facing a \$70 million deficit," said Currey according to the [Contra Costa Times](#). "The mayor's position is: Let's not rule out any options." The city's sign ordinance is in the process of being revamped, in what some view as the opportunity to use illegal billboards to the city's advantage in an effort to create revenue for the city, which is struggling with cash. In the new sign ordinance, there is a provision that permits companies to advertise in local parks and the Los Angeles Zoo. As the talk of advertising on city property takes off, the controversy over the idea is creating a storm in and around the city. Last year, the city permitted an advertisement for the Yogi Bear movie in one of its city parks. Los Angeles is not the only city doing this, as Chicago has already posted ads on some of its most famous bridge houses. The new ordinance on signs in the city would also create 16 new sign districts that operate from Los Angeles Airport to North Hollywood in addition to the advertisements being permitted in the Los Angeles Zoo and city parks. It is expected to take anywhere from two to three months to complete the draft of the ordinance, which will then be reviewed by the panel before it is submitted to the full council of the city. The general manager of the Department of Recreation and Parks, Jon Mukri, also supports the advertisements in the city parks along with the city's mayor and his administration. "I don't prostitute my home to make money in bad times," said Barry Johnson, a member of the Studio City Neighborhood Council. "Let's not do it to our public facilities. Let's weather the storm." Tom LaBonge is a city councilman who regularly hikes Griffith Park in the early morning but he has wavered on whether advertising should be allowed in the city parks. LaBonge wonders if the city council even has jurisdiction to govern the case, which made him suggest the approval of advertising case by case. "I know there is extreme pressure (to advertise)" said LaBonge, according to the [Contra Costa Times](#). "But I don't want to lose the experience when you go into the park ... there is a value when you get into nature." Another example of areas using public buildings to advertise in an effort to make money includes Georgia. The state opened up its state parks to companies looking to advertise, bringing with it a ton of backlash and controversy.