



Will a ban be put in place concerning mobile billboards?

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You've seen the trucks on the strip and in your neighborhoods, mobile billboards that hit the roads everyday with just one purpose, eye-catching advertising.

But many say they are just eyesores, and as Contact 13 Chief Investigator Darcy Spears has learned, concerns over safety, traffic, congestion, and pollution may lead to the billboards being banned.



With all the flashy, in-your-face images up and down the Las Vegas strip, one thing is standing out.

"I think the mobile billboards should go away," said Paul Dymon.

Unlike taxicabs and buses whose primary purpose is moving people, with ads as an extra, mobile billboards have no purpose on the road other than to sell something.

"The traffic on the strip is an obvious problem," said Paul.

Paul Dymon and other locals have been complaining about mobile billboards to county leaders, demanding something be done about what they call hazardous distractions on our roads.

"My complaint to the county commissioner was about safety, the obvious pollution factor," explained Paul.

County commissioner Chris Giunchigliani has launched a full-scale investigation.

"If you really look at our ordinance, they're really not supposed to be on the streets," said Chris.

Her district includes the strip North of Flamingo Road.

"What I'm concerned about is the safety issue of the roadway, the congestion especially and the backing up of the traffic. We have a scenic byway on the Las Vegas strip which they really shouldn't be on in that way as well," said Chris.

"It doesn't pollute the landscape, it is not there when you don't need it," said Marla Letizia.

Marla Letizia runs Big Traffic, the largest mobile billboard company in town.

"If I could find a hybrid, if I could find all electric, we're experimenting now with bio-diesels in order to make those changes," said Marla.

It's not just traffic and environmental concerns that are raising eyebrows. There's a content debate raging both outside and within the industry over what, exactly, some mobile billboards are selling, whether it's appropriate and whether it's even legal.

Signs advertising "Hot babes direct to your room" sell services that seem to fly in the face of Clark County's prohibition on prostitution.

"I am offended by it! Both from a local community resident and I'm offended by it because it's personal in that so many people in this community think that it is me that is running that content because I am the president of the association," said Marla.

"I'm not gonna get into the content debate because I don't care what's on it, I just don't think they should be there," said Chris.

"All of these illegal operators are really what is giving the industry such a bad name," said Marla.

She's talking about the unlicensed, out-of-market billboard fleets that flock to town during conventions.

But another member of her own local association operates illegally as well and isn't afraid to admit it.

"I don't think that there's a way to regulate this," said Anthony Cools.

Hypnotist Anthony Cools has a regular gig on the strip and his own fleet of mobile billboards, all of which put clients names in lights.

County ordinance prohibits vehicles with signs that have moving or flashing lights or animation of any kind.

"Never had it enforced, don't expect to have it enforced. Have you been to the strip lately? I mean, seriously, come on, there are so many moving, flashing lights everywhere on the strip, this blends in," said Anthony.

Commissioner Giunchigliani plans to bring the fight to the upcoming legislative session, hoping a new state law will ban mobile billboards for good.

"Does it really bring back a benefit to the community or not? I would say not," said Chris. Other cities like New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco have mobile billboard bans, which the industry is fervently fighting.

They recently lost a battle in Austin, Texas when the city council there approved a ban, calling mobile billboards eyesores which pollute the environment.

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