

San Jose Sign Code Update – Series IV  
Meeting Notes  
July 9, 2009

---

***Business Owner Focus Group***

***7/9/09; 10:30 a.m.***

**5 attendees (including representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Silicon Valley Auto Dealers Association, 1<sup>st</sup> Act and major shopping centers)**

STATIC BILLBOARDS

Strategy 1 – Current billboard regulations	0
Strategy 2 – Large on-site advertising in Central Area of Downtown Core	2
Strategy 3 – Billboards in Central Area of Downtown Core	0
Strategy 4 – Billboards in the Central Area of Downtown Core + along SR-87 Downtown Core	2

- As a business owner, I would have to pay a billboard company to remove a billboard somewhere in the city if I wanted to put a new billboard up on my property – that doesn't make any sense to me.
- How many billboards are there on 87 currently? *There are very few billboards along 87 right now, except at the very far northern end.*
- None of these have an option of going higher than 30 feet? *Actually, the ones along the freeway have the option to go 50 feet. In our Sign Industry Focus Group yesterday, ClearChannel indicated they would need 55 to 60 feet. I would want to make these are high enough that they're effective on 87. The people pulling into downtown – that's what they're looking for.*
- Does #2 limit anything close to 87? Or does that include 87? *It's only talking about the central area of the downtown core. I like #2 also because it's less restrictive, but if it had 87 in it or some allowance for some off-site messaging, I think it opens the door for commerce.*
- From what I understand, #2 is more liberal than #4, is that right? #2 will be the most liberal for the core. *But it doesn't allow off-site advertising – it allows big signs for businesses. I would go with #2 if I could vote again.*

PROGRAMMABLE ELECTRONIC (LED) BILLBOARDS

Strategy 1 – Current large programmable electronic billboard prohibition	1
Strategy 2 – Large programmable electronic signs in the Downtown Core Central Area On-site Messages Only	1
Strategy 3 – Large programmable electronic signs in the Central Area of Downtown Core – On- & Off-site Messages	0
Strategy 4 – Large programmable electronic signs in the Central Area of Downtown Core + along SR-87	2

- I can't understand who would want this – it's an anti-billboard policy. *The reason we put this in the strategies is that when we went out to the neighborhoods where there are a lot of billboards, they said there are billboards they'd love to have go away. Some are not maintained; others are in poor locations. This strategy would allow for new billboards while removing older ones. The billboard companies did not express concern regarding this feature. They probably have a few they are*

San Jose Sign Code Update – Series IV  
Meeting Notes  
July 9, 2009

---

*willing to give up in order to build new ones in better locations.* To me, this doesn't seem to be a liberalization going one way or the other. *Tell us what you like and what you would put together.* I would put together anything that liberalizes signage in a commercial area – not a residential area. Simply saying you have to take away 5 just to get 1 doesn't make sense.

- The on-site message thing is what is stumbling me up on this one. I like the less restrictions on #2. If it was an electronic store that sold iPods, could they advertise with Apple? If it's a restaurant or something that sold a brand of booze in their bar, they could advertise that?
- Why take any billboards away? What is the philosophy behind that? *There are people in the community that think billboards cause blight in their neighborhoods. Some of the existing billboards are not in commercial areas.*
- Is the current prohibition on the LED billboards because they are so bright and a traffic hazard? *No, these regulations were put in place before LED signs were available. Traffic safety is an issue for LED signs although we don't have any clear conclusions that they cause crashes.*
- I voted to retain the current regulations because I think billboards are so ugly.

PROGRAMMABLE ELECTRONIC SIGNS

Strategy 1 – Retain current regulations	No tally; Comments only
Strategy 2 – Assembly uses	
Strategy 3 – Major commercial streets	
Strategy 4 – Large occupancy frontages in the downtown	

- The problem I have is that most of the assembly uses are in residential neighborhoods, like schools and churches.
- My feeling is that they're not advertising off-site messages, why not have them shut them off during the night?
- I'd be in favor of the option of adding electronic signage. I'm trying to think of who would want option 4 aside from the sports arena? Have you had a request for this?
- I don't like option #4.
- I would vote for anything that would liven up the downtown core.
- Something as big as 40 s.f. could be effective if higher up on a building, especially if they integrated it into the architecture. But down at street level, it would just hit you in the face, I would think.

SHOPPING CENTER FREEWAY SIGNS

Strategy 1 – Current regulations	0
Strategy 2 – Static freeway Signs	0
Strategy 3 – Programmable electronic signs	5

San Jose Sign Code Update – Series IV  
Meeting Notes  
July 9, 2009

---

SUPERGRAPHICS

Strategy 1 – Retain current regulations	0
Strategy 2 – Supergraphics as temporary on-site signs	1
Strategy 3 – Supergraphics as permanent changeable on- or off-site advertising	3

- What we're talking about really is like the sign on 87 that covers Swenson's? *That's the type of sign we're talking about. But not one that covers windows.*
- We need good on-site advertising in the city; we already have lots of off-site advertising and it doesn't add to San Jose.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Will this go to Council as one piece? *There will be recommendation from Staff - then the Council will provide direction regarding the preferred strategy and ask staff to prepare an ordinance. Is the Council meeting open to the public? Yes, we'll send you a notice of when it's taking place.*