

San Jose Sign Code Update – Series IV
Meeting Notes
July 8, 2009

Resident Focus Group
7/8/09; 4:45 p.m.
2 attendees

STATIC BILLBOARDS

Strategy 1 – Current billboard regulations	0
Strategy 2 – Large on-site advertising in Central Area of Downtown Core	0
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

PROGRAMMABLE ELECTRONIC (LED) BILLBOARDS

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

- So this is the same as a regular billboard? *Same except for the separation requirements. Relocation requirement is a higher ratio.*
- So let's take 87 as the example – is this 6 static billboards or 6 LED billboards?
- What is the relocation? *If you want a new billboard, you'll have to remove 5 s.f. of an existing billboard for every 1 s.f. of new electronic billboard.*
- So there will be 1/5 the number of billboards if companies switch them out – that seems very restrictive. I thought this was 5 static billboards for one electronic billboard. *It's five of any billboards could be switched out for one new one.* I don't understand why it's important to restrict the number of billboards. We're not inundated with billboards in San Jose – or maybe I'm not noticing them. What if we said 2:1 or 3:1 – have you considered other numbers? *So you think it*

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would be better to preserve billboards? Yes, the city is going to grow and there is going to be a need for these.

- My problem is that if you're saying these billboards are programmable, there is more of an advantage to put them in. So the only ones downtown are the programmable ones.

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	

- My general view is that these electronic signs are the way of the future and companies like the auto companies can use them to advertise their latest specials. I don't have a fundamental problem with programmable or electronic signs. Is it correct that strategy 2 is not allowed yet? That a school cannot put a sign up? *A public school can, but the private schools fall under current City regulations which do not allow them.* I would like to see some restrictions on whether they are facing neighborhoods. Churches are in neighborhoods, but if it's facing the street, that would be less of a problem than if it was blaring into the houses behind them. I have a problem with the minimum sizes – some of them are too small. I would suggest a minimum size as well as a maximum – or restrict them to fixed messages. If they have rolling ticker tape messages, it should be big enough. Is there a restriction on the number per mile, like the static signs? *For #2, it would be by location. For #3, you don't qualify for one unless you have 100 feet of property frontage; the size increases as the property frontage increases.. For Strategy 4, you wouldn't see a lot right away because you don't have a lot of large tenant spaces..* My gut is that we should be replacing static signs with these types of signs because my sense is that they would improve the area, as long as there are not too big or too many.
- Where would a stadium fall into? *It's based upon seating or a fixed area.* I'm worried about the safety issue along these frontages, people being distracted and we could have more accidents. Have there been any safety studies done? *There have been a lot of studies and they are inconclusive.* The performing arts theater downtown, they have a programmable electronic sign, so that's an example of a large assembly use. I feel that static signs are better, because if the message is moving, you are detracted for a longer period from watching the road and that bothers me. If it was no scrolling messages allowed, that would be okay, like going from one static message to another.

SHOPPING CENTER FREEWAY SIGNS

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

- The difference between the two are programmable signs, and I prefer programmable signs.

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- I'm still trying to figure out – this would be advantageous to these 2 or 3 shopping centers – but I'm trying to figure out what the benefit would be?

SUPERGRAPHICS

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

- Have building owners indicated an interest in this kind of ability to advertise? Has anyone in downtown San Jose? *We have not heard of anyone requesting these types of signs, but we have seen them used downtown on the new residential towers. On signs, you can't have a quality control review so that it meets certain standards because it's a constitutional question. We can have criteria, but not a lot of discretion. We are not able to control everything. If you can tie a number to it and measure it, it's more likely to be an acceptable regulation.*
- To me, these look better than a blank wall that has been obviously opened up to the public. I would think that if we were going to have an advertising message, it should be an on-site message. *Do you think we will see better images if they're on-site?* Yes, I think so – the local owner will care more about what the sign will look like. I see permanent temporary as a way to gain fees every time there is a change. There should probably be a requirement that they should remove them after a certain period of time.