

I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

Christiaan Beekhuis

Thu 2/22/2024 11:00 AM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

[External Email]

[You don't often get email from christiaan.beekhuis@googlemail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear CED committee,

I have been a resident of downtown San Jose since 1989 and love it here.

However, the proposal to add a large number of digital billboards is disturbing to me. This email is a request that this proposal be rejected.

I feel that these billboards will be visually disturbing to the residents and visitors to downtown. In addition, they have a significant negative environmental impact related to their nighttime light pollution and large energy use.

It is unclear to me why the City Council is proceeding when the public is overwhelmingly against this proposal.

Please reject it.

Respectfully,

Christiaan Beekhuis

Sent from my iPhone

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I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

Michael Kevane

Thu 2/22/2024 11:07 AM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>; Torres, Omar <Omar.Torres@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

[External Email]

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Dear council member Torres and others,

I am a downtown resident 00 block 14th St and firmly oppose digital billboards downtown. This is the wrong direction for the city. I hope you will change your current stance supporting digital billboards to oppose them.

Best regards

Michael

Michael Kevane | [REDACTED]

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I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

mariastaken@aol.com

Thu 2/22/2024 1:45 PM

To: Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; district7@sanjoseca.go <district7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>; steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

[External Email]

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community.

- Six years after approving digital billboards on public property NO elected or appointed official knows the total amount of money the City will earn by allowing new billboards. How can the City Council make major policy decisions without knowing the details of what they've signed up for?

- Take down those blighted conventional billboards! Remember that was the major argument billboard proponents advocated in return for allowing new digital billboards. The trouble is members of our City Council knew from the start that new digital billboards downtown were deliberately exempted from the requirement to take down 6 conventional billboards for each new digital going up.

- Billboards and the myth of urban vibrancy are all talking points of the billboard industry. There is no evidence of electricity-hungry digital billboards on public buildings

downtown would be good for the economy. It's more than likely just the opposite would happen. Billboards all over downtown will drive people away.

- The City just lost a lawsuit related to not following its own rules and making a backroom deal for billboards at the Airport. Cities with lots of billboards are cities with lots of lawsuits costing taxpayers lots of money.

- Remember that a City survey with over 2000 respondents showed 90% opposition to billboards? The bottom line - the public is not asking for billboards in San Jose.

- Lobbyists and special interests are the ones asking for digital billboards. Council members have had many meetings with lobbyists from billboard companies in the last three months and not one meeting with anyone who thinks digital billboards are bad news.

- Driver distraction - Digital billboards threaten driver safety and run counter to the city's Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic fatalities.

- Light pollution - Lick Observatory would be negatively impacted due to light pollution, similar to the already intrusive Levi's Stadium Jumbotron.
- Local businesses do not benefit - Digital billboards typically advertise nationally consumer products and services.
- Wildlife disruption - Digital billboards are opposed by the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.

Please vote against any new proposals.

Please include this comment in the public record for February 26th, 2024

Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Regards,

Maria Burrus

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I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

Vivian Kramp

Thu 2/22/2024 2:05 PM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

[External Email]

[You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community.

- Please don't ignore the citizens who voted for you anymore! This is a representative government and you must follow the wishes of the residents. Remember that City survey with over 2000 respondents showed 90% opposition to billboards? Bottom line - the public is not asking for billboards in San Jose.
- Lobbyists and special interests are the ones asking for digital billboards. Council members have had many meetings with lobbyists from billboard companies in the last three months and not one meeting with anyone who thinks digital billboards are bad news.
- Driver distraction - Digital billboards threaten driver safety and runs counter to the city's Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic fatalities.
- Light pollution - Lick Observatory would be negatively impacted due to light pollution, similar to the already intrusive Levi's stadium Jumbotrons.
- Local businesses do not benefit - Digital billboards typically advertise national consumer products and services.
- Wildlife disruption - Digital billboards are opposed by the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.
- Six years after approving digital billboards on public property NO elected or appointed official knows the total amount of money the City will earn by allowing new billboards. How can the City Council make major policy decisions without knowing the details of what they've signed up for?
- Take down those blighted conventional billboards! Remember that was the major argument billboard proponents advocated in return for allowing new digital billboards. The trouble is members of our City Council knew from the start that new digital billboards downtown were deliberately exempted from the requirement to take down 6 conventional billboards for each new digital going up.
- Billboards and the myth of urban vibrancy are all talking points of the billboard industry. There is no

[REDACTED]

evidence electricity-hungry digital billboards on public buildings downtown would be good for the economy. It's more than likely just the opposite would happen. Billboards all over downtown will drive people away.

- The City just lost a lawsuit related to not following its own rules and making a backroom deal for billboards at the Airport. Cities with lots of billboards are cities with lots of lawsuits costing taxpayers lots of money.

Please vote against any new proposals.

Please include this comment in the public record for the February 26th 2024 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Thank you.

Regards,
Vivian Kramp

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

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I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

james rogers <jrogers@garlic.com>

Thu 2/22/2024 2:26 PM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

[External Email]

You don't often get email from jrogers@garlic.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Committee Members,

I hope you will recommend AGAINST placing lighted electronic billboards on city property (or anywhere else). I see that you are hoping they will create a new revenue stream for the City, which I know you need. However, in order to recommend in favor of this policy you should find out how much income these billboards will actually produce. If not an absolute number, then at least a percentage of the rent you will receive from advertisers.

Will any of the advertisers be local? Most of these type of advertisers are national branded products, not local merchants.

Last year Gilroy considered allowing a huge (14' x 42') billboard to be erected on private property. We learned that the City would actually NOT receive any direct revenue and the ads would be priced out of reach of local businesses, even the auto dealers. The Council did vote against the proposal and residents were relieved and happy.

Consider that the public overwhelmingly is opposed to these signs vs. the little revenue you may see. The trade off is not worth alienating your residents and voters. There are MANY reasons to reject electronic billboards and only a dubious one in favor.

Sincerely,

Connie Rogers
former Gilroy City Council Member
jrogers@garlic.com
408-842-8494

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Fwd: Community and Economic Development Meeting (Billboards) 02/26/2024

Tod [REDACTED]

Thu 2/22/2024 2:37 PM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

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Please move my comment in Letters From the Public from Anti-Displacement Tenant Preference and Neighborhood Tenant Preference for Affordable Housing Draft Programs Status Report to Digital Billboards Status Report. Thank you.

Please include this comment in the public record for the February 26th 2024 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

February 15, 2024

RE: Community and Economic Development Meeting (Billboards) 02/26/2024

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am old enough to remember the 101 freeway littered with billboards in the 60's. I have also had the opportunity to live in many cities across the United States and have found that the more upscale cities have curtailed billboards and maintained billboard bans. The initial ban including removal guidelines had actually been in place since 1972. We can only imagine the billboard debacle without this ban.

City data states: "...any decision to allow new billboards is a weighty one with long-term implications; once billboards are in place, options for removing them are likely to be very expensive, regardless of changes in community expectations and public policy."

This long-standing ban is already supported by a majority of residents and has been in place to protect our city. Many persuasive reasons have been given to keep the original ban in place including environmental and safety concerns but in general replacing one form of blight with a new or prettier one is a poor decision. I also do not see billboards as any form of "art". We must always think of the future and money can't be the main consideration. Please re-evaluate this detrimental change and do the right thing by reinstating (and even strengthening) the billboard ban.

2/26/24, 8:38 AM

Thank you,

Tod Williams

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Oppose billboards in San Jose

Jelena Medan

Thu 2/22/2024 3:11 PM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community.

Billboards and the myth of urban vibrancy are all talking points of the billboard industry. There is no evidence electricity-hungry digital billboards on public buildings downtown would be good for the economy. It's more than likely just the opposite would happen. Billboards all over downtown would look bad and drive people away.

And have to include wildlife disruption - Digital billboards are opposed by the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.

Please vote against any new proposals.

Please include this comment in the public record for the February 26th 2024

Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Thank you.

Regards,

Jelena Medan

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NDBSJ submission on billboard topic for CED Committee mtg on Feb 26, 2024

jhemp@mac.com

Fri 2/23/2024 9:05 AM

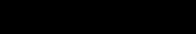
To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: John Miller <miller@johnmillerpr.com>; Les Levitt <lesk2pv@aol.com>; No Digital Billboards In San Jose <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

 2 attachments (1,022 KB)

NDBSJ letter to CED Committee Feb 23 2024.pdf; NDBSJ Presentation 24-02-12 Rev H.pdf;

[External Email]

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Dear Committee members,

We are submitting a formal letter and presentation in response to the Feb 16th staff memo attached to agenda item 3 titled "Large-Format Digital Signage on City-owned Property Status Report" by Nanci Klein and Chris Burton. We hope you take our questions and concerns up with staff during your committee meeting on Monday, Feb 26th.

See attached:

- Letter
- Slides

Let us know if you have any questions. We are open to provide an in-person presentation upon request as well.

Regards,

Jason Hemp, Les Levitt, & John Miller



This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Feb 23, 2024

To: City of San Jose CED Committee
From: Jason Hemp, John Miller, Les Levitt (No Digital Billboards in San Jose)

Subject: Digital Billboards Agenda item#3, Feb 26 2024 meeting

Dear Committee members,

In regard to the memo dated Feb 16, 2024 from Chris Burton & Nanci Klein with the Subject "Large-Format Digital Signage on City-owned Property Status Report", we find that the provided memo from city staff is misleading and incomplete. Specifically:

- * **Airport billboards** - There is no update on the recent Superior Court ruling, ordering the City to invalidate the no-bid contract with Clear Channel for digital billboards on airport property. Perhaps Council Member Cohen can follow up on this, being that he is the Council's airport liaison?
- * **Public opposition** - There is no mention of the City's own survey that found that 93% of over 2000 respondents oppose new digital billboards along freeways, and 80% opposed them downtown or attached to buildings. Staff has never referenced this in subsequent status updates on this topic.
- * **No takedown requirement** - The memo does not mention the fact that there is no takedown requirement of existing conventional billboards for the downtown select sites (aka Building-Mounted Signage). Can you request clarification that this is true?
- * **Revenue / Cost-benefit analysis** - Has staff performed a cost-benefit analysis (in dollars) for City revenue potentially generated by the downtown billboards proposal? Has there been any estimate on total revenue dollars the City will receive annually once all of the proposed Phase 1 sites are up and running?
- * **Vibrancy myth** - The memo states the signage will "enhance the commercial vibrancy of downtown San Jose" among other claims. Where is the data or research supporting the claim that digital billboards will spur so-called urban "Vibrancy?"
- * **Litigation risk** - Has the City Attorney's Office evaluated the litigation risk if the City proceeds to allow new billboards solely on public/city-owned property, and exclude private property owners from pursuing the same revenue opportunities? (Refer to article "The San Jose Problem" on slide 7 of our presentation for details).

We hope the above questions & concerns can be address at the CED Committee meeting or at least direct staff to look into these further.

Regards,
Jason Hemp, Les Levitt, & John Miller
No Digital Billboards In San Jose - Steering Committee

(see attached)

No Digital Billboards in San José

Update

- Airport billboards: Airport Commission warned twice not to proceed
Council ignored
Stopped by Court order Dec 2023
Judge ordered City to invalidate the contract
- Downtown billboards: Notice of Intent to Award to Orange Barrel Media 2022
Update expected at CED Committee February 2024
- Outside Downtown billboards: Notice of Intent to Award to Clear Channel 2021
Status unknown

The following sites have been confirmed by San Jose's Office of Economic Development (OED) as still being considered for digital billboards:

- McEnery Convention Center
- The Tech Interactive
- Center for Performing Arts
- Market/San Pedro Parking Garage
- 2nd St and San Carlos Parking Garage (3Below Theater)
- Hwy 87 and Mission
- Mabury Service Yard

No Digital Billboards in San José

Options

- Airport billboard project:
 - a) Start over with new bidding process
 - b) Re-vote at Council to allow a no-bid contract
 - c) Revise Policy 6-4 to remove bidding requirement
 - d) Shelve the project ✓

- Downtown billboards:
 - a) Carry on with EIRs and approvals
 - b) Shelve the project ✓

- Outside Downtown billboards:
 - a) Carry on with EIRs and approvals
 - b) Shelve the project ✓

Revenue

- Billboard companies use the same playbook City to City. Dangle a revenue number in front of the City. Send in the lobbyists.
- After 5 years, revenue details for Downtown billboards remains a secret.
- Even optimistic speculation suggests revenue would be relatively small. Especially for downtown billboards with low volume views.
- The tradeoff: Small amount of revenue vs. compromising the character, architectural integrity, and positive street environment of Downtown.
- Want revenue from billboards? How about an annual permit fee for the hundreds of existing static billboards in San Jose?

No Digital Billboards in San José

Take Down Requirements

- A foundational argument billboard proponents made when rescinding the ban on new billboards was that some conventional billboards would be removed if new digitals were approved.
- But...There is no take-down requirement for the Phase 1 Downtown billboards. Not one existing billboard will be removed under the plan.
- Bait and switch. Justify new digitals with a take-down argument then exempt downtown from takedowns.

Urban Vibrancy Myth

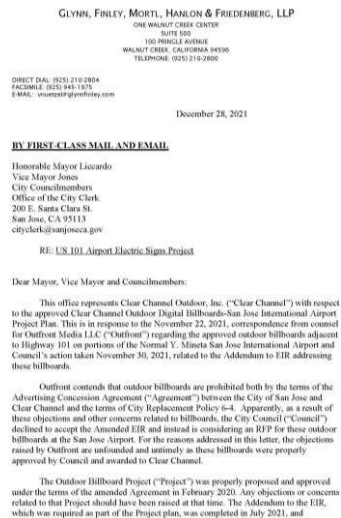
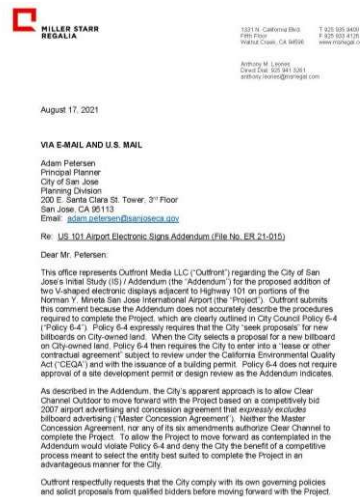
- Billboard companies use the same playbook City to City: They talk about billboards as if they were a public service and works of art.
- Reality: Digital Billboards are power hungry advertising screens showing national brands like McDonald's and Coca Cola 90% of the time. We turn into Anyplace USA.
- Billboards all over downtown on public assets like museums and performing arts venues will likely backfire and drive people away from Downtown.
- Wayfinding signs are another Trojan Horse for advertising.



No Digital Billboards in San José

Litigation

- Cities with lots of billboards are cities with lots of lawsuits costing taxpayers lots of money. The City has already been on the losing side of a BB lawsuit.
- If San Jose continues to pursue billboard projects exclusively on public property, it will face litigation on the grounds that the city cannot go into the billboard business while denying that opportunity to others on private property.
- The City Council has a fiduciary responsibility to their stakeholders, the residents of San Jose, to heed warning signs in factoring the total cost-benefit to our community in pursuing digital billboards.



The San Jose Problem

By Jennifer Sloane, Esq.

As an attorney for the OOH industry, I love to see comments by local governmental officials such as those pointed out in the article [New Digital Signs Headed For San Jose, CA](#). In that article, the city councilperson stated, in summary, that they wanted to allow billboards on city land but not on private land because if they allowed billboards on private land "...it makes it more competitive and it makes it more difficult for the city to get the ad revenue." These comments are setting the City up for a potential suit challenging the law that would preclude advertising on private property so that the City can get their hands on all of the ad revenue spent within their City limits. This, my unsuspecting city councilmember, constitutes a violation of the Sherman Act that precludes anticompetitive legislation.



"I would gladly take the call of any OOH operator that wants to challenge a San Jose law that allows the City to have billboards on their land, but not grant the same rights to the citizens of San Jose. It's a no-brainer!" Law Office of Jennifer Sloane, Esq.

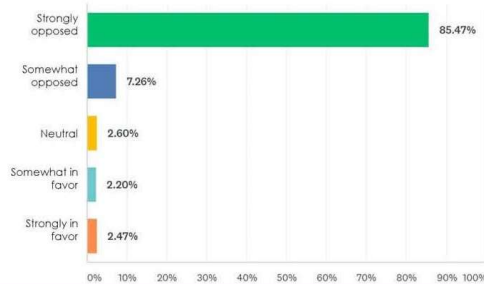
No Digital Billboards in San José

Public Opposition to Billboards

- Over 2,000 respondents to a San Jose Planning Department survey oppose digital billboards. Almost 93% oppose them on freeway facing property. 80% oppose them on buildings in Downtown San Jose.

City of San José Survey: Digital Billboards

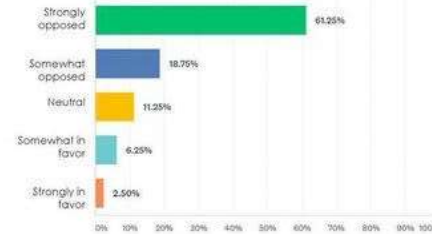
Item 3: In general, how do you feel about allowing new digital billboards to be built along freeways in San José?



5

City of San José Survey: Digital Billboards

Item 11: In addition to free-standing digital billboards along freeways, the City is considering allowing both digital and static advertising signs attached to buildings within the Downtown. How do you feel such signs being attached to buildings in Downtown San José?



13

No Digital Billboards in San José

History

(1972)

Councilman Goglio moves adoption of the policy that the City prohibit the future location of billboards on City-owned land, and that all existing billboards on City-owned land be removed within a period of five years, seconded by Councilman Colla and adopted. Ayes: Councilmen - Colla, Garza, Goglio, and Mineta. Noes: Councilmen - Hayes and Hays. Absent: Councilman - Naylor.

(1985) *"The planning commission did a three year study and determined that an abundance of billboards is "visual blight." City officials said, reducing this kind of conspicuous advertising will improve the overall appearance of the city, and this in turn will encourage economic development."* – Mercury News article 1985

(1985) *"Planning department officials say the ordinance is designed to encourage the revitalization of downtown and major thoroughfares."* – Mercury News article 1985

(1985) *"The ban is an expression of a very strong commitment on the part of the city council to beautify the city"* – Gary Schoennauer Director of Planning

(2023) San Jose Metro Area - #1 in Per Capita GDP in USA

No Digital Billboards in San José

Why Billboards Are a Bad Idea

- Visual Pollution
- Overwhelming public opposition
 - Local business does not profit
- Insignificant revenue to the City
 - Energy Hogs
 - Light pollution
- Wildlife disruption
- Driver distraction
- Litigation threats
 - Tree removal
- Captive Audience

(Source: <https://www.billboardsno.org/know-the-issue>)

No Digital Billboards in San José

Supplemental: Op-Eds

1. The Last Thing San Jose Needs is More Billboards, *Mercury News*, August 12, 2020
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/08/12/opinion-the-last-thing-san-jose-needs-is-more-billboards/>
2. Op-Ed: Is San Jose Ready for as Many as 112 Digital Billboards?, *San Jose Inside*, Jan. 6, 2021
<https://www.sanjoseinside.com/opinion/op-ed-is-san-jose-ready-for-as-many-as-112-digital-billboards/>
3. Levitt: Electronic billboards may work for Denver but they should not define San Jose, *San Jose Spotlight*, February 16, 2021
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/levitt-electronic-billboards-may-work-for-denver-but-they-should-not-define-san-jose/>
4. Op-ed: San Jose allowing 22 digital billboards without environmental review, *San Jose Spotlight*, June 26, 2021
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-san-jose-allowing-22-digital-billboards-without-environmental-review/>
5. Digital Billboards in San Jose? It's Worse Than You Think, *Mercury News*, July 9, 2021
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/07/09/opinion-digital-billboards-in-san-jose-its-worse-than-you-think/>
6. Should a 'Vibrant Downtown' San Jose Include Gawdy Digital Billboards?, *San Jose Inside*, July 26, 2021
<https://www.sanjoseinside.com/opinion/should-a-vibrant-downtown-san-jose-include-gawdy-digital-billboards/>
7. Op-ed: Airport Commission should not rubber stamp digital billboards at SJC, *San Jose Spotlight*, Sept. 28, 2021
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-airport-commission-should-not-rubber-stamp-digital-billboards-at-sjc/>
8. Op-ed: Airport Violates City Rules When It Comes to Digital Billboards, *San Jose Inside*, Oct. 14, 2021
<https://www.sanjoseinside.com/opinion/airport-violates-city-rules-when-it-comes-to-digital-billboards/>
9. Op-ed: San Jose Airport Commission to City Council—say no to digital billboards, *San Jose Spotlight*, Nov. 26, 2021
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-san-jose-airport-commission-to-city-council-say-no-to-digital-billboards/>
10. Op-ed: City staff should not be in service to the billboard lobby, *San Jose Spotlight*, Dec. 31, 2021
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-city-staff-should-not-be-in-service-to-the-billboard-lobby/>
11. Op-ed: Litigation will be common if San Jose allows digital billboards on public property, *San Jose Spotlight*, February 11, 2022
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-litigation-will-be-common-if-san-jose-allows-digital-billboards-on-public-property/>
12. Op-ed: Bring San Jose's billboard ban back with a ballot measure, *San Jose Spotlight*, June 6, 2022,
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-bring-san-joses-billboard-ban-back-with-a-ballot-measure/>
13. Op-ed: Taking down billboards in San Jose—who benefits?, *San Jose Spotlight*, Oct. 11, 2022
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-taking-down-billboards-in-san-jose-who-benefits/>
14. Op-ed: The Billboard Issue Is About A Lot More Than Billboards, *San Jose Inside*, Oct. 28, 2022
<https://www.sanjoseinside.com/opinion/the-billboard-issue-is-about-a-lot-more-than-billboards/>
15. Op-ed: Public Records Act enforcement needed more than ever, *San Jose Spotlight*, Jan. 31, 2023
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-public-records-act-enforcement-needed-more-than-ever/>
16. Op-ed: Judge voids airport billboard contract after San Jose failed to follow its own rules, Jan. 9, 2024
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/op-ed-judge-voids-airport-billboard-contract-after-san-jose-failed-to-follow-its-own-rules/>

No Digital Billboards in San José

Supplemental: Articles

San Jose gets sued for ignoring its billboard rules, *San Jose Spotlight*, Aug. 12, 2022,
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/san-jose-gets-sued-for-ignoring-its-billboard-rules/>

San Jose officials squash airport billboard proposal, *San Jose Spotlight*, June 14, 2022
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/san-jose-officials-squash-mineta-international-airport-digital-billboard-sign-proposal-sjc/>

San Jose should nix plan to build 2 new billboards, Editorial, *Mercury News*, Feb. 15, 2022
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2022/02/15/editorial-keep-san-jose-billboard-ban-in-place/>

San Jose may end ban on billboards, *Mercury News*, Jan., 29, 2022
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2022/01/29/this-bay-area-city-is-poised-to-end-a-decades-old-billboard-ban-despite-widespread-objection/>

South Bay astronomers fear proposed airport billboards would threaten night viewing, *Mercury News*, Jan., 25, 2022
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2022/01/25/south-bay-astronomers-fear-proposed-airport-billboards-would-threaten-night-viewing/>

Opinion: Why we voted against San Jose airport digital billboard plans, (Airport Commissioners), *Mercury News*, Nov. 29, 2021
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/11/29/opinion-why-we-voted-against-san-jose-airport-digital-billboard-plans/>

Survey shows San Jose residents oppose billboards amid city-led plans, *San Jose Spotlight*, April 13, 2021
<https://sanjosespotlight.com/survey-shows-san-jose-residents-oppose-billboards-amid-city-led-plans/>

Billboard industry takes on public in digital-sign wars, *Mercury News*, Feb. 15, 2021
<https://www.mercurynews.com/2021/02/15/billboard-industry-vs-public-will-who-will-win-the-battle-over-digital-signs-in-san-jose/>

The San Jose Problem, *Billboard Insider*, Oct. 5, 2018
<https://billboardinsider.com/the-san-jose-problem>

No Digital Billboards in San José

I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

Gina Spada [REDACTED]

Fri 2/23/2024 12:47 PM

To: Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>; steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community.

Six years after approving digital billboards on public property NO elected or appointed official knows the total amount of money the City will earn by allowing new billboards. How can the City Council make major policy decisions without knowing the details of what they've signed up for?

Take down those blighted conventional billboards! Remember that was the major argument billboard proponents advocated in return for allowing new digital billboards. The trouble is members of our City Council knew from the start that new digital billboards downtown were deliberately exempted from the requirement to take down 6 conventional billboards for each new digital going up - simply more back room dealing by a crooked council no wonder San Jose is in shambles.

Billboards and the myth of urban vibrancy are all talking points of the billboard industry. There is **no evidence** electricity-hungry digital billboards on public buildings downtown would be good for the economy. It's more than likely just the opposite would happen. Billboards all over downtown will drive people away.

The City just lost a lawsuit related to not following its own rules and making a backroom deal for billboards at the Airport. Cities with lots of billboards are cities with lots of lawsuits costing taxpayers lots of money.

Remember that City survey with over 2000 respondents showed 90% opposition to billboards?

Bottom line - the public is not asking for billboards in San Jose.

Lobbyists and special interests are the ones asking for digital billboards. Council members have had many meetings with lobbyists from billboard companies in the last three months and not one meeting with anyone who thinks digital billboards are bad news.

Driver distraction - Digital billboards threaten driver safety and runs counter to the city's Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic fatalities.

ONE fatality is ONE too many - the current state of D3 and San Jose when it comes to driving, driver safety, navigating safe roadways is already challenging. Adding yet ANOTHER distraction is simply another threat to driver safety.

Light pollution - Lick Observatory would be negatively impacted due to light pollution, similar to the already intrusive Levi's stadium Jumbotrons.

Local businesses do not benefit - Digital billboards typically advertise national consumer products and services.

Wildlife disruption - Digital billboards are opposed by the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.

I completely disagree to the position taken by D3 Council member Omar Torre's that digital billboards are "art and digital signage" they are a danger to society and a nuisance to all.

Please vote against any new proposals.

Please include this comment in the public record for the February 26th 2024 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting. Noting the calls and zoom comments are disabled, I'd attend the meeting myself to voice my opinion in person but I have a job that I need to go to in order to pay my taxes.

Regards,

Gina Spada - D3

I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

Olga Martynenko [REDACTED]

Sat 2/24/2024 12:19 PM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

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Dear Committee Members,

I don't live in San Jose but I visit often and take my out of town guests to the museums downtown.

Put up digital billboards and I will definitely find a better place to spend my time and money.

I don't think I will be the only one with such preferences.

Somehow areas with lots of billboards are associated with trash, homeless camps, drugs and is mostly avoided.

Digitals are even worse than old-fashioned since it distracts drivers, impacts wild life, and consumes energy.

Please stop digital billboards from trashing downtown or anywhere else in San Jose.

Most sincerely,

Olga Martynenko
[REDACTED]

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I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

M.B. Lennon

Sat 2/24/2024 7:24 PM

To: Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>; steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community. The City just lost a lawsuit related to not following its own rules and making a backroom deal for billboards at the Airport. Cities with lots of billboards are cities with lots of lawsuits costing taxpayers lots of money. Please vote against any new proposals.

Please include this comment in the public record for the February 26th 2024 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Regards,

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy A54 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

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I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

April Halberstadt

Sun 2/25/2024 4:06 PM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

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I am appalled that our elected officials have decided to oppose a public vote.

I have lived in Downtown San Jose for fifty years - and I vote!

April Halberstadt

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billboards

Janet Darrow [REDACTED]

Sun 2/25/2024 5:47 PM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

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To the mayor, city council and CED committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to approving ANY electronic billboards in San Jose. There are few issues that have over 90% of residents in agreement, and this is one of them. There are many additional reasons to vote no:

- Light pollution
- Distracting drivers
- No apparent financial benefit
- Negative effects on wildlife
- Wasteful use of energy-I thought we cared about climate issues in San Jose!

Do we really need to be exposed to more ads in our lives? NO!

Janet Darrow
[REDACTED]

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Opposition to San Jose Billboards

Lisa Bedard [REDACTED]

Sun 2/25/2024 11:04 PM

To: Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>; steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community.

I have lived in SJ for most of my life. I LOVE that there are almost no billboards in the city. I don't want that to change. They are ugly, distracting, and add no value to the city. I object to them for many reasons as noted below.

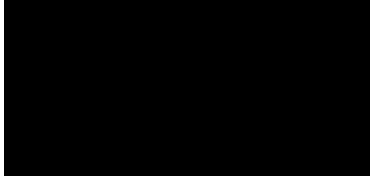
- Six years after approving digital billboards on public property NO elected or appointed official knows the total amount of money the City will earn by allowing new billboards. How can the City Council make major policy decisions without knowing the details of what they've signed up for?
- Take down those blighted conventional billboards! Remember that was the major argument billboard proponents advocated in return for allowing new digital billboards. The trouble is members of our City Council knew from the start that new digital billboards downtown were deliberately exempted from the requirement to take down 6 conventional billboards for each new digital going up.
- Billboards and the myth of urban vibrancy are all talking points of the billboard industry. There is no evidence electricity-hungry digital billboards on public buildings downtown would be good for the economy. It's more than likely just the opposite would happen. Billboards all over downtown will drive people away.
- The City just lost a lawsuit related to not following its own rules and making a backroom deal for billboards at the Airport. Cities with lots of billboards are cities with lots of lawsuits costing taxpayers lots of money.
- Remember that City survey with over 2000 respondents showed 90% opposition to billboards? Bottom line - the public is not asking for billboards in San Jose.
- Lobbyists and special interests are the ones asking for digital billboards. Council members have had many meetings with lobbyists from billboard companies in the last three months and not one meeting with anyone who thinks digital billboards are bad news.
- Driver distraction - Digital billboards threaten driver safety and runs counter to the city's Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic fatalities.
- Light pollution - Lick Observatory would be negatively impacted due to light pollution, similar to the already intrusive Levi's stadium Jumbotrons.

- Local businesses do not benefit - Digital billboards typically advertise national consumer products and services.
- Wildlife disruption - Digital billboards are opposed by the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.

Please vote against any new proposals.

Please include this comment in the public record for the February 26th 2024 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Regards,
Lisa Bedard



This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

I am writing to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community.

Rebecca Smith

Mon 2/26/2024 1:00 AM

To: Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>; steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>; Rebecca Smith <smithrebsmith@aol.com>

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I'm writing to ask you what the financial benefit is in having digital billboards in San Jose. To date there appears to be no published budget cost benefit of allowing digital billboards, information that ought to be readily available to the taxpayer, especially six years after approving such billboards.

After factoring in:

- the substantial costs of the recent lawsuit the City lost related to not following its own rules and in making a backroom deal for billboards at SJC;
- the costs of forthcoming lawsuits if you approve digital billboards on public property in San Jose;
- payroll for the hours spent by the Office of Economic Development, the City Attorneys office, and the many meetings with billboard lobbyists;
- additional power costs to operate the billboards;

what is the estimated dollar benefit? Is there one? If so, approximately how much revenue can the taxpayer and City expect to receive?

To cover the costs of the lawsuit the City lost alone would require digital billboards to bring in substantial dollars. What is that estimated dollar figure?

Certainly there is an estimated budget cost for the power required to keep the billboards running, for how could such a project get considered if this fundamental requirement is not understood? That's just bad business to not have some idea of this.

You have a responsibility, as elected city council members and mayor, to the residents of San Jose to make fiscally sound decisions. In order to do this, there must be a budget cost benefit analysis before any decision can be made.

Until such a budget is shared with the public, I urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community.

Public Comment - CED 2/26 - Item (d)3 "Digital Billboard Status Report"

Jordan Moldow

Mon 2/26/2024 1:22 AM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; Torres, Omar <Omar.Torres@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Public Comment from Jordan Moldow (speaking on behalf of himself) regarding Item (d)3 "Digital Billboard Status Report" - CED 2/26:

Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council Members,

I am writing to state my opposition to digital billboards in San Jose, and to urge you to oppose any new billboard proposals in our community. Lick Observatory would be negatively impacted due to light pollution, similar to the already intrusive Levi's stadium Jumbotron and countless other sources of light pollution. Lick Observatory is a gem of our area, and every new source of light pollution harms their operations.

Dark skies are a critical, underappreciated resource that all humans, and all life on our planet, deserve to have access to. As a society, we need to be moving **away from** indiscriminately shining more and more lights into the air. Electronic billboards, by their nature, cannot be targeted/shielded, and thus will always have at least some negative impact on light pollution (see <https://darksky.org/what-we-do/advancing-responsible-outdoor-lighting/>). Also, because these billboards are primarily for displaying advertisements, it is very likely that they will not meet the other darksky.org principles: they won't be guaranteed to be warm-colored, they won't be guaranteed to be controlled, it is unlikely that they will be a low level of luminance (based on what I've seen from existing digital billboards in the area), and they won't be very useful to society at-large.

Sure, these billboards will bring in money to the city. But will that money be used to mitigate the increased light pollution? Very unlikely. As far as I'm aware, the city hasn't even committed to removing flood light-lit billboards in equal-or-greater amounts to the number of digital billboards that will be installed.

In order for me to be okay with the installation of digital billboards, these conditions would need to be very strictly met:

- The total amount of light pollution must decrease, by removing flood light-lit billboards whose total light pollution is greater than the light pollution of the installed digital billboards.
- All digital billboards must be operated in a way that strictly meets all five of the core darksky.org principles. Brands cannot purchase ads that violate any of the principles, because the billboard would physically disallow it (e.g. all ads must be warm-colored and an appropriately low-level of

[REDACTED]
luminance). Billboard operators that violate these principles should be fined and have their billboards shut down.

- All digital billboards must be operated in a way that strictly meets all of the [darksky.org Guidance for Electronic Message Centers \(EMCs\)](https://darksky.org/Guidance-for-Electronic-Message-Centers-(EMCs)); the Minimum Requirements, and Best Management Practices, and Measurement practices. Lighting zone should be LZ2 or lower. The city should monitor all digital billboards as described. Billboard operators that violate the requirements or repeatedly yield too-high luminosity measurements should be fined and have their billboards shut down.

Only in this way can these billboards be a net good for our night skies, and for our society.

But if this approach isn't going to be taken, then please vote against any new proposals, and direct staff to cancel all current digital billboard work. There are so many more urgent, important, and actually beneficial projects that the Economic Development and Cultural Affairs could redirect its staff time towards.

I'd like to leave you with one final thought. The staff presentation says that digital billboards will "Enhance the commercial vibrancy of Downtown" and that they are a good alternative to static billboards, which are described as "blighted". I would like to point out that "blight" is highly subjective. As you can see in the many public comments you have received in opposition to this proposal, (a) many people (including myself) consider all large public advertisements from non-local brands to be blight, regardless of whether it is static or digital (or perhaps even more so if it is digital); (b) many people (including myself) consider unnecessary light pollution and unnecessary advertisement animation/rotation to be a form of blight. So eliminating blight and creating vibrancy are very poor justifications for digital billboards.

Regards,

Jordan Moldow (speaking on behalf of himself)



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Item 3 on the February 26th CED agenda - Digital Billboard Status Report

Shani Kleinhaus

Mon 2/26/2024 7:05 AM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: Matthew Dodder <director@scvas.org>; Manford, Robert <Robert.Manford@sanjoseca.gov>; Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>

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February 26, 2024

RE: Item 3 on the February 26th CED agenda - Digital Billboard Status Report

Dear Chair Foley and members of the Economic Development Committees,

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) is one of the largest Audubon Society chapters in California. Our mission promotes the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and other wildlife by engaging people of all ages in birding, education, and conservation.

SCVAS has been consistently and vocally opposed to electronic billboards in San Jose since 2017. In the 7 years since Council started promoting electronic billboards, as the community became aware and educated, anxiety spread and opposition grew. Scientists, environmental groups, grassroots community groups, and thousands of residents have engaged, all expressing unwavering opposition.

The overwhelming opposition to electronic billboards is not surprising. These billboards create visual clutter and light pollution that increases stress, harms migratory birds, and degrades quality of life for all. Rather than enhance the commercial vibrancy of Downtown, billboards create a dilapidated, desperate image. Furthermore, they attract drivers' attention and are hazardous to drivers, bikers and pedestrians. Unlike other issues in the public realm, where opinions differ and compromises are feasible, the pervasive and unavoidable impacts of electronic billboards are impossible to reconcile.

In a world of digital technology, these oversized, menacing and environmentally harmful, energy-wasting billboards should be deemed obsolete. People prefer a dark sky, and so should the city of San Jose.

Respectfully,

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate

I oppose digital billboards in San Jose

barbara fontana <fontanabarbara@yahoo.com>

Mon 2/26/2024 7:25 AM

To: CEDCommittee <CEDCommittee@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: steering.committee@billboardsno.org <steering.committee@billboardsno.org>

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I strongly oppose digital billboards because we **do not** need that type of digital distraction while driving. Too many people are currently distracted with texting or talking on their iphones or multitasking with kids, people or their work while driving.

High speeds and distractions are a recipe for accidents.

PLEASE do NOT approve Digital Billboards to add to SAFETY issues. Do not let incoming Revenue from digital billboards influence your vote. **VOTE NO on digital Billboards.**

Barbara Fontana

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