

## PMHCC Community Impact Statement

RE: Citywide Digital Sign Ordinance.

Date: June 19, 2020

### Opposition to digital billboards in the Park Mesa Heights Community

The Park Mesa Heights Community Council is in opposition of the digital billboard ordinance potentially targeting the Park Mesa Heights community (e.g Florence, Hyde Park, Slauson and Crenshaw corridors) in the Angeles Mesa, Hyde Park, and View Heights in the 90043-zip code. The Park Mesa Heights Community Council (PMHCC) has concluded that the negative impact of digital billboards outweighs any possible benefits presented at past meetings by representatives who were in favor of digital billboards. For example; one of the claims is that the billboard industry offers community benefits towards services, such as free space for our community and law enforcement to use. However, the fact that cell phone apps the Caltrans Amber Alert, and access to social media debunks their claim because these online tools serve the same purpose without obstruction to our neighborhoods.

The Park Mesa Heights Community Council opposes digital billboards in for the following reasons:

1. **Safety:** Billboards in general are designed to distract motorists' attention from the road. This will put pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers at risk. Studies have shown that billboards (particularly digital billboards), take drivers' eye's off the road for dangerously long gazes. This is a problem especially when digital billboards change messages every 6-8 seconds, encouraging motorists to spend an increased amount of time glancing off the road. It's important to note that the City of Los Angeles and Metro allowed for an at-grade rail to run north and south on Crenshaw Boulevard between 48<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Streets. Crenshaw is a major thruway in Los Angeles. The decision to allow an at-grade rail caused great safety and hazard concerns for the Park Mesa Heights community. Digital Billboards coupled with an at-grade rail is not a good match for our community. Motorists' should not be focused on anything else but driving.
2. **Health Concerns:** Health issues have been identified from digital billboards. Digital Billboards are a health hazard for people causing photosensitive epilepsy, seizures, retinal damage, stress, commuter stress, and sleep disruption. Digital billboards create light pollution. With 1000's of LED lights on billboards and ads that typically change every 6-8 seconds, will cause a nuisance to residents living near the signs and surrounding neighborhoods. Digital Billboards are turned on 24/7. **They do not turn off.** This will be an obstruction of the peace and comfort of our stakeholders. They will change the culture of the community from single family living to a metropolis invading the personal space of residents.
3. **Beautification:** There is no question about it. The stakeholders want and need beautification in the Park Mesa Heights neighborhoods. Beautification is deserved and long overdue in our community. Despite the community's opposition, the Park Mesa Heights community was forced to upon an at-grade rail which is and will continue to be a permanent eyesore. Therefore, it's important the Park Mesa Heights community has a strong voice and a place at the table when discussing beautification plans. Digital billboards are not part of the plan.
4. **Privacy Conflicts:** Digital billboards track people. According to *Consumer Reports*, there are devices behind the screen that are picking ID numbers from our cell phones. *"Data that includes your gender, age, race, income, interests, and purchasing habits can be used by a company to trigger an advertisement. Once your phone is detected near a screen showing an ad, an advertising company may follow up by showing you related ads in your social media feed"*: <https://www.consumerreports.org/privacy/digital-billboards-are-tracking-you-and-they-want-you-to-see-their-ads/>
5. **Elimination of Revenue Sharing for Business:** It is also important to note that the businesses or property owners in the Park Mesa Heights Community who currently benefit from the existing traditional style billboards will be at a disadvantage. If existing traditional billboards have appropriate content, clean, properly maintained and in

compliance with code and permits, we as a Community Council have no interest in taking revenue away from stakeholders. By removing these billboards and replacing them with digital, this will eliminate needed revenue as business owners who have struggled through the train construction, and now Covid-19 will have to bear another financial burden.

6. **Declining Property Value:** Studies have found that Digital Billboards has a negative effect on property values.

**Resolution for Existing and Future non-digital Billboards:**

The Park Mesa Heights Community Council recognizes that property and business owners in the community benefit financially by displaying classic style billboards. We wish to support the continuance of this benefit with conditions. It's been noted that many of billboards along the corridors do not currently align with the beautification goals of our community. Following are recommended resolutions:

1. **Existing Billboards:** Billboards in violation of code must be remedied or removed. It has been noted that there are many unkept billboards in Park Mesa Heights (e.g. rusty, torn, lighting). We believe that property owners and the billboard companies must be held responsible and accountable for the regular maintenance and upkeep of these billboards. Currently, the standards are not satisfactory. We encourage and ask for regular inspections of all billboards within the Park Mesa Heights community boundaries to ensure that billboard lighting is in working order, and that billboards are kept clean, painted, safe, and ads are not torn. It is also important that content is appropriate.
2. **Permits:** We oppose any billboards that are not permitted or if permits are altered or outdated. We encourage and ask for permit checks. Billboards permit status should be remedied timely or be removed.
3. **Quantity & Spacing:** We encourage a "cap" on the number of billboards within the corridors and adequate spacing between billboards. We discourage the installation of additional billboards. Additionally, we recommend that billboards remain along the main corridors, and not be allowed into the cross streets or smaller streets of our neighborhoods.

On behalf of the Park Mesa Heights Community Council.

Sincerely,

<<Insert Name>>