

RESOLUTION NO: 96-34
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES
GRANTING NEGATIVE DECLARATION STATUS FOR
CODE AMENDMENT 95014
(CITY INITIATED - EXPANSION OF HIGHWAY SIGN DISTRICT
AT GOLDEN HILL ROAD)

WHEREAS, the City of Paso Robles has initiated Code Amendment 95014 which proposes to expand the geographic district in which highway oriented signs may be considered and approved via conditional use permits, to include properties located at the Highway 46 East and Golden Hill Road interchange, and

WHEREAS, an Initial Study was prepared for this project (Attached as Exhibit A), and

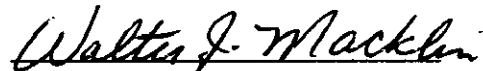
WHEREAS, a public hearing was conducted by the Planning Commission on January 8, 1996, February 12, 1996, February 26, 1996, and March 11, 1996, and by the City Council on February 6, 1996, March 5, 1996 and April 2, 1996 to consider the initial study prepared for this application, and to accept public testimony regarding this proposed environmental determination on the code amendment, and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the code amendment will not have the potential to create significant environmental impact/effect.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that based on the City's independent judgment, the City Council of the City of El Paso De Robles does hereby grant a Negative Declaration status for Code Amendment 95014.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 2nd day of April, 1996 by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Iversen, Martin, Macklin
NOES: Heggarty, Picanco.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: None.


MAYOR WALTER J. MACKLIN
City of El Paso de Robles

ATTEST:

RICHARD J. RAMIREZ, CITY CLERK

mw\ordin\hwy\env.res

INITIAL STUDY

DATE: December 20, 1995
FILE #: CODE AMENDMENT 95014
APPLICATION: To expand the geographic district where a highway oriented sign could be approved subject to CUP approval
APPLICANT: City Initiated

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION: Attached.
2. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: Attached.
3. IDENTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: Please see attached Initial Study Checklist.
4. DISCUSSION OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:
If any of the items on the Initial Study Checklist are marked "Yes/Maybe", please see the attached Analysis for discussion and recommendations for mitigation or further environmental study.
5. CONSISTENCY OF PROJECT WITH EXISTING GENERAL PLAN, ZONING AND OTHER LAND USE CONTROLS:
 This project is consistent with the City's General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and other land use controls.
 This project involves a request to change the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and/or other land use controls.
6. PERSONS PARTICIPATING IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS INITIAL STUDY:
Meg Williamson, Principal Planner
7. DETERMINATION: On the basis of this Initial Study:
 I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a Negative Declaration will be prepared.
 I find that, although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described on the attached Discussion of Environmental Evaluation have been added to the project. A Negative Declaration will be prepared.
 I find that there is insufficient information to determine whether the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment and that the applicant needs to provide additional information in the form of an expanded initial study.
 I find that the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, and recommend that an Environmental Impact Report be prepared.

Meg Williamson, Principal Planner

INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

FILE #s: CODE AMENDMENT 95014
 APPLICATION: To establish additional district area where Highway signs may be permitted subject to conditional use permit approval
 APPLICANT: City initiated

This Initial Study Checklist was completed by reviewing the project application in light of the following:

- a. The City's General Plan, Municipal Code and adopted Standards;
- b. Environmental information and studies maintained by the City;
- c. Consultation, when necessary, with Responsible and Trustee Agencies, as defined by CEQA, and other interested parties;
- d. Observation of the project site in the field.

All items checked "Yes/Maybe" will be discussed in the section entitled "Analysis" attached to this checklist.

If an item is checked "No", the project will either not have a significant effect on the environment, or, any potential significant effects will be mitigated by standard conditions of development required by the City.

Item	Environmental Impact	Yes/Maybe	No
1.	<u>LAND USE, POPULATION, HOUSING:</u>		
a.	Alteration of present or planned land use in an area.....	.....X.....	.....
b.	Compatibility with existing or planned land uses in an area.....	.....X.....	.....
c.	Alteration of location, distribution, density or population growth rate of an area.....	.....	...X..
d.	Affect existing housing or create demand for additional housing.....	.....	...X..
e.	Airport Land Use Plan.....	.....	...X..
2.	<u>CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION:</u>		
a.	Traffic generation.....	.....	...X..
b.	Traffic access, movement, hazards.....	.....X.....	.....
c.	Pedestrian, bicycle systems.....	.....	...X..
d.	Parking facilities.....	.....	...X..
e.	Emergency vehicle access.....	.....	...X..
f.	Air, rail operations.....	.....	...X..
3.	<u>GEOLOGY AND SOILS:</u>		
a.	Unstable earth, changes in geological substructures.....	.....	...X..
b.	Changes to soil strata (disruption, displacement, compaction, etc.).....	.....	...X..
c.	Exposure of people or property to landslides and seismic hazards.....	.....	...X..
d.	Increase in soil erosion.....	.....	...X..

Item	Environmental Impact	Yes/Maybe	No
4.	<u>SURFACE AND SUBSURFACE WATER:</u>		
a.	Changes to groundwater flows.....		...X..
b.	Groundwater quality and quantity.....		...X..
c.	Streamcourse alteration and siltation.....		...X..
d.	Increase in runoff, storm drainage impact.....		...X..
e.	Other water-related impacts.....		...X..
5.	<u>VEGETATION AND ANIMAL LIFE:</u>		
a.	Oak trees.....		...X..
b.	Other vegetation concerns.....		...X..
c.	Wildlife habitats.....		...X..
d.	Other wildlife concerns.....		...X..
6.	<u>AIR QUALITY:</u>		
a.	Creation of air emissions.....		...X..
b.	Creation of objectionable odors.....		...X..
c.	Alteration of air movement patterns.....		...X..
d.	Other air quality concerns.....		...X..
7.	<u>PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES:</u>		
a.	Fire protection.....		...X
b.	Police protection.....		...X
c.	Water service.....		...X
d.	Sewer service.....		...X
e.	Street maintenance.....		...X
f.	Other governmental services.....		...X
g.	PG&E.....		...X
h.	So. California Gas Co.....		...X
i.	Sonic Cable TV, Pacific Bell.....		...X
j.	Solid waste disposal.....		...X
8.	<u>HEALTH AND SAFETY:</u>		
a.	Noise: Creation of or exposure to.....		...X..
b.	Light & Glare: Creation of.....	.....X.....	.....
c.	Electromagnetic disturbance, radiation.....		...X..
d.	Health hazards: Creation of or exposure to.....		...X..
e.	Fire, Explosion, Chemical spill.....		...X..
9.	<u>AESTHETICS:</u>		
a.	Visually-sensitive area or corridor.....	.....X.....	.....
b.	Hillside, grading issues.....		...X..
c.	Other aesthetic concerns.....		...X..
10.	<u>PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE:</u>		
a.	Impact on public parks and recreation.....		...X..
b.	Generates need for private recreation.....		...X..
c.	Need to maintain open space.....		...X..
11.	<u>CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL:</u>		
a.	Historic and/or cultural sites.....		...X..
b.	Archaeological sites.....		...X..

Item	Environmental Impact	Yes/Maybe	No
12.	<u>NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY:</u>		
a.	Natural resources supply.....	.....	...X..
b.	Energy supply.....	.....	...X..
13.	<u>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE:</u>		
a.	Potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a wildlife species, cause wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.....	.....	X
b.	Potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals..	.....	X
c.	Impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable.....	.....	X
d.	Substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.....	.....	X

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

CODE AMENDMENT 95014 (EXPANSION OF HIGHWAY SIGN DISTRICT AT
GOLDEN HILL ROAD INTERCHANGE - CITY INITIATED)

1. Item 1a and 1b (Land use and compatibility):

The existing geographic districts allow for freeway oriented signs (signs higher than 6 feet in height) subject to a Conditional Use Permit. This code provision was established by the City Council in 1991. The existing Highway sign districts are located in the vicinity of the Highway 46 East and Highway 101 Interchange, and adjacent to Highway 101 near the Highway 46 West Interchange.

The purpose and intent in creating the districts was to recognize the special needs of certain businesses who rely on the traveling motorist (tourist) as a customer. Limiting the geographic district kept within the community image goals to minimize visual clutter within the community.

The parcels proposed to be included in the expanded highway sign district are at the four quadrants of the Highway 46 East and Golden Hill Road intersection. This is an area that is planned for commercial service development in the City's General Plan and Zoning Code. With the recent addition of the traffic signal at this intersection it is even more likely that the area will experience further development that will likely cater to the traveling/visiting customer.

Highway oriented signs would not likely be incompatible with surrounding businesses of light industrial and commercial uses, provided that the design and use of signs is adequately addressed (see discussion under Aesthetics).

2. Item 2b (Traffic Movement):

In a situation where service businesses are designed to draw the traveler off of the road (gas service stations, hotels, restaurants), it is likely safer for the motorist to see the business from a greater distance and be able to prepare for a safe turning movement. A highway oriented sign could provide this potential.

3. Item 3b (Light and Glare):

While an illuminated pole/highway oriented sign may have the potential to create light and glare to surrounding uses and/or motorists, the design review required in conjunction with the establishment of such signs would allow the Development Review Committee (DRC) to adequately address the design concerns through sign design, lighting intensity, colors and materials.

4. Item 9a and 9c (Aesthetics):

This stretch of Highway 46 is a corridor that is perceived by the traveler as an entrance to Paso Robles. Projecting a positive community image for Paso Robles is of great importance, not only for the businesses located in the direct vicinity, but to the larger business community as a whole, and the people who live here.

The properties that are proposed to be considered for the expanded highway sign district are all in close proximity to Highway 46 East. There are no large interchange structures (bridges, off-ramps and overpasses) to block the visibility of signs on these properties. Because of this high visibility there is not a functional need to have signs of great height or excessive size. However, the additional sign height and size would provide for appropriate increased visibility to the traveler.

To assure that signs considered for approval are not out of scale with the area and other surrounding signs, it is recommended that the Council adopt design standards via Resolution (the same as was done with freestanding signs located in the Regional Commercial zoning district). This should be done in conjunction with action on an ordinance allowing the expansion of the highway oriented sign district. The purpose and intent of the guidelines would be to maintain height and size limitations, and establish expectations for appropriate appearance and use.

As discussed above, the design review process associated with a highway oriented sign would provide the means of measuring the appropriateness of the sign aesthetics and consistency with all appropriate General Plan goals and zoning standards.

Conclusion:

The appropriateness of sign design can be handled on a case by case basis through the design review process and would not have a negative impact on the environment.