

RESOLUTION NO. 96-44
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES
GRANTING NEGATIVE DECLARATION STATUS FOR
CODE AMENDMENT 96001
(CITY INITIATED -REUSE OF POLE SIGNS AND
ALLOWANCE FOR AIRBORNE TEMPORARY ADVERTISING)

WHEREAS, the City of Paso Robles has initiated Code Amendment 96001 which proposes to allow for the re-use of existing pole signs, and to consider allowing for temporary airborne advertising signs (such as blimps), 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 March 11, 1996, and by the City Council on April 2, 1996 and April 16, 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 96001.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 16th day of April, 1996 by the following roll call vote:

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


MAYOR WALTER J. MACKLIN

ATTEST:



RICHARD J. RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER/ CITY CLERK

mw\ordin\poles\env.res

INITIAL STUDY

DATE: February 19, 1996

FILE #: CODE AMENDMENT 96001 (POLE SIGNS/BLIMPS)

APPLICATION: To consider permitting the re-use of existing pole signs and allow for the temporary use of airborne advertising

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

MW\ORDIN\POLES\INITSTUD

INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

FILE #s: CODE AMENDMENT 96001
 APPLICATION: To allow for the re-use of pole signs and the use of inflatable advertising materials
 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.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Environmental Impact</u>	<u>Yes/Maybe</u>	<u>No</u>
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..
<u>Item</u>	<u>Environmental Impact</u>	<u>Yes/Maybe</u>	<u>No</u>
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 96001 (PROVISIONS FOR REUSE OF EXISTING POLE SIGNS
AND USE OF AIRBORNE TEMPORARY ADVERTISING (BLIMPS)
(CITY INITIATED)

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

Pole Signs:

Existing pole signs are scattered in locations throughout the City, with the greatest concentration being in the existing Highway-Oriented Sign Districts adopted under the City's sign code. The greatest number of pole signs which could be potentially affected by this ordinance would be those along the Spring Street corridor, Riverside Avenue, and the Golden Hill Road/Wallace Drive area.

Pole Signs located in the vicinity of the existing Highway-Oriented Sign District have the greatest potential for being visually compatible with surrounding signs and their associated businesses. Those pole signs along the Spring Street corridor have the greatest potential for conflicting with the City's efforts towards enhancement of the historic character of the downtown core, and to minimize the "strip-commercial" character potential of Spring Street.

Signs which are lower in height and less visually competitive in their design would characterize the direction which sign design has taken along Spring Street over the past 5 years. Numerous pole signs along the Spring Street corridor were redesigned to a monument sign scale under the current sign code standards. Allowing for a reversal of that direction in sign design could raise the issue of equity for current versus past businesses who have or have had pole signs.

Although the re-use of pole signs would not increase the number of pole signs in the community, it would slow the progression for redesign of pole signs to the same sight level as monument signs (prolonging the time when business signs would be in the same "playing field" in terms of their height).

Beyond the equity issue along Spring Street, there is also an issue of design compatibility. With a majority of signs being lower in height (6 foot maximum), and the traveling public being more attuned to this lower line of sight, it may be questioned if the pole signs are truly compatible anymore.

However, because the code amendment would only allow re-use of existing signs, and not allow for the establishment of new ones, there would not be a significant environmental effect associated with land use compatibility.

Airborne Temporary Advertising:

Commercial and Residential districts are separated, generally, by perceptible physical boundaries such as streets, highways, drainage courses, or sometimes man-made separations such as walls.

When blimps/balloons/roof mounted inflated, three dimensional signs and advertising are used, businesses become not only more visible to freeway travelers, but also to surrounding properties. The signage associated with commercial business activity is generally not perceptible to surrounding residential uses when it is contained "on-site." However, airborne advertising crosses the physical boundaries normally in place, and makes these commercial businesses more imposing and visible to residential neighborhoods. It has not been uncommon for the Community Development Department to receive complaints from surrounding residential areas about flying signs.

This issue of compatibility is a measure of the Commission and Council's judgment of community image and what is considered acceptable appearance for a commercial use.

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. Some pole signs might provide this potential.

It is not clear whether airborne advertising would have that same effect, since such signing is often difficult to read.

3. Item 8b (Light and Glare):

While an illuminated pole sign may have the potential to create light and glare to surrounding uses and/or motorists, the design review required in conjunction with the re-use of such signs would allow the Development Review Committee (DRC) to adequately address the design concerns through sign design, lighting intensity, colors and materials. It is not anticipated that airborne advertising would have any significant effect on light and glare, provided that if they were to be permitted, there was a restriction on the incorporation of lighting.

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

The City of Paso Robles has consistently strived to encourage and nurture development and business ventures that run the spectrum from retail, to service, to tourism. The appearance of the City's various business districts is critical in how Paso Robles is perceived.

There have been concerted efforts on the part of Main Street and the Redevelopment Project Area Committee to establish and have the City administer design guidelines which would enhance the historic character and the potential for economic vitality within the community. The current sign code and the restriction on pole signs and airborne advertising were a result of efforts put forth by these groups along with City staff and policy makers.

To assure that efforts towards downtown revitalization and enhancing the Spring Street corridor are achieved, it is recommended that the re-use of pole signs in these areas continue to be restricted.

Conclusion:

Pole Signs: It would seem most appropriate to mitigate potential impacts to community design goals within the downtown district and Spring Street corridor to exclude these areas from allowing the re-use of pole signs. In all cases, the appropriateness of sign design can be handled through the design review process and would not have a negative impact on the environment.

Airborne Advertising: To introduce this type of signage opportunity to all commercial businesses would seem to be creating an undesirable impact to community image efforts. However, if there is merit found in allowing for such activity, it would be recommended that a business desiring such advertising must abide by the same time limits/controls as banners, and that a permit (no cost) be obtained to document the permissible duration of the advertising. Such a permit would aid in staff's ability to follow up on enforcement complaints.