



Planning Commission

August 13, 2025

**Item #5:
1700 Duane Ave**

Meha Patel, Associate Planner



Request

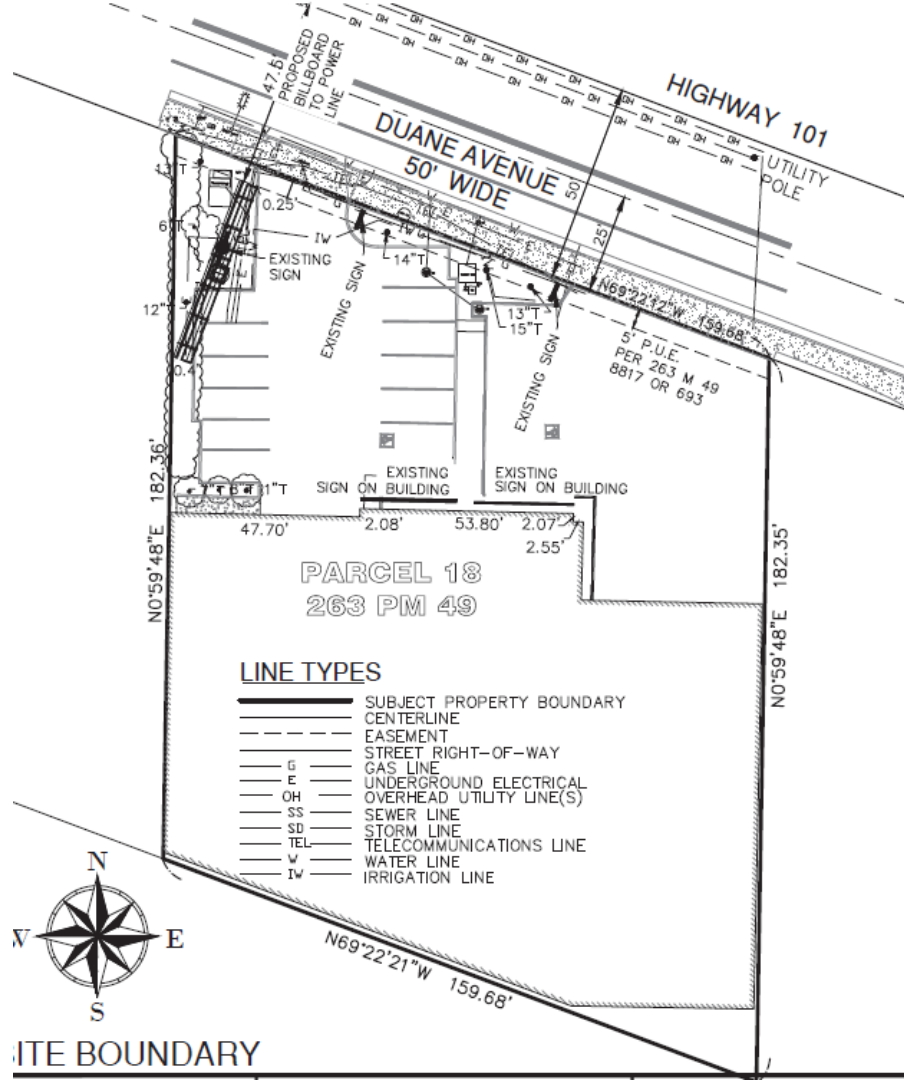
- **Conditional Use Permit** for a new electronic digital display message sign per Santa Clara City Code Section 18.42.140.C (Electronic Digital Display Message Signs).
- **Minor Modification** to reduce the 1,500 linear foot separation distance from another electronic digital display message sign by up to 25% per SCCC Chapter 18.124 (Variance and Minor Modifications).
- **Recommendation to the City Council** to Approve the Adoption of the Billboard Relocation Agreement, per SCCC Section 18.42.090.C (Outdoor Advertising Display Relocation Requirements).

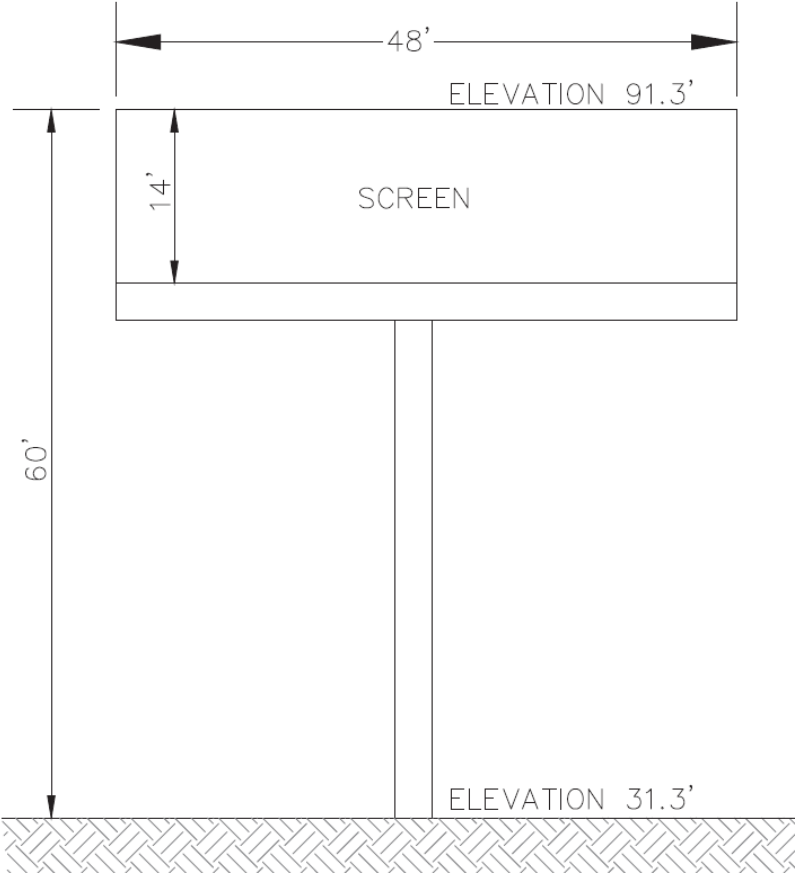
Existing Site

- **Acreage:** 0.66 acres
- **Surrounding Uses:**
 - **N:** US 101 Highway
 - **S:** LO-RD – Low-Intensity Office/R&D, Business Office Building
 - **E:** LO-RD – Low-Intensity Office/R&D, Data Center
 - **W:** LO-RD – Low-Intensity Office/R&D, Landscape & Tree Services
- **General Plan Designation:** Low-Intensity Office/Research & Development
- **Zoning:** LO-RD – Low-Intensity Office/R&D



Site Plan







Consistency with Zoning Code

- Conditional Use Permit is required per SCCC Section 18.42.140.C (Electronic Digital Display Message Signs).
- The proposed electronic digital display message sign meets the Development Standards in Section 18.42.140.F. Note:
 - **Height:** As authorized by the Code, the height is set by the Conditional Use Permit to 60 feet for the proposed billboard, which is an appropriate height for a sign adjoining a freeway.
 - **Separation:** The applicant requests a **Minor Modification** to reduce the 1,500-foot separation distance from another electronic digital display message sign to 1,187 feet.
- The proposed sign complies with all the applicable in Subsection 18.42.140.G (Operational Standards) and all applicable Federal and State laws

Billboard Relocation Agreement

- City's general policy is to reduce the overall number of billboards through the Billboard Relocation Agreement by encouraging the removal of existing billboards and generally prohibiting the construction of new billboards.
- The replacement is a 3:1 Ratio (3 removed, 1 new).





Background

- This item is continued from the April 16, 2025, Planning Commission hearing date per Planning Commission's request to provide additional traffic and vehicle safety research on:
 - Message Hold Time
 - Frequency of Billboards/Electronic Message Signs
 - Illumination

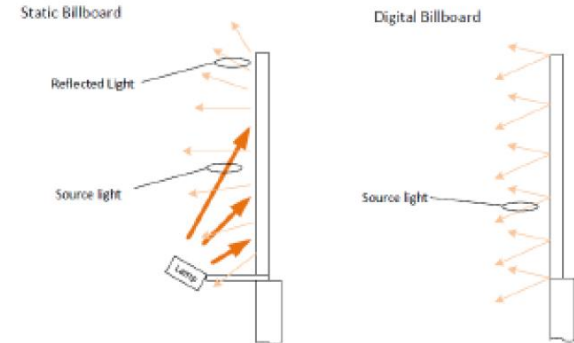


Additional Requested Research

- Message Hold Time
 - Glances towards digital signs were occasionally longer than static signs, but consistently remained under two seconds.
 - Studies that observed increased attention to digital signs did not establish a causal link between message frequency and crashes.
- Frequency of Billboards/Electronic Message Signs
 - The proposed billboard consistent with California Business and Professions Code sections 5404, 5405, and 5408.
 - Section 5405 requires a minimum 1,000 feet distance of another message center display on the same side of the highway, creating a 10.49 second interval between two signs when traveling at 65 miles per hour.
 - The proposed billboard is approximately 1,187 feet and 1,440 feet from other existing LED signs

Additional Requested Research

- **Illumination**
 - LED billboards' illumination is focused and directed at a specific target audience.
 - Proposed billboard will operate at a brightness level consistent with Zoning Code standards and at a fraction of what State law permit.
- **Impact of Digital Billboards on Vehicle and Traffic Safety**
 - Applicant hired Abrams Associate, a traffic engineering firm, to summarize accident history along U.S. Highway 101 in Santa Clara before and after digital billboard installation. Results were largely inconclusive; however, no causal link between digital billboards and accident rate was identified.
 - Many variables contribute to a decrease or increase in accidents. Accidents are multicausal events which are difficult to measure.





San Jose Airport Comments and Caltrans Pre-Approval

- On Monday April 14, 2025, Planning Division received comments from San Jose Airport Planning and Development department.
- These comments have been forwarded to the applicant and will be added as Conditions of Approval for the project.
- The applicant has also received preliminary approval from Caltrans.



CEQA Evaluation

- The project is found to be Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3 -- New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), in that the proposed use consists of construction of new, small structures or where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of a structure.



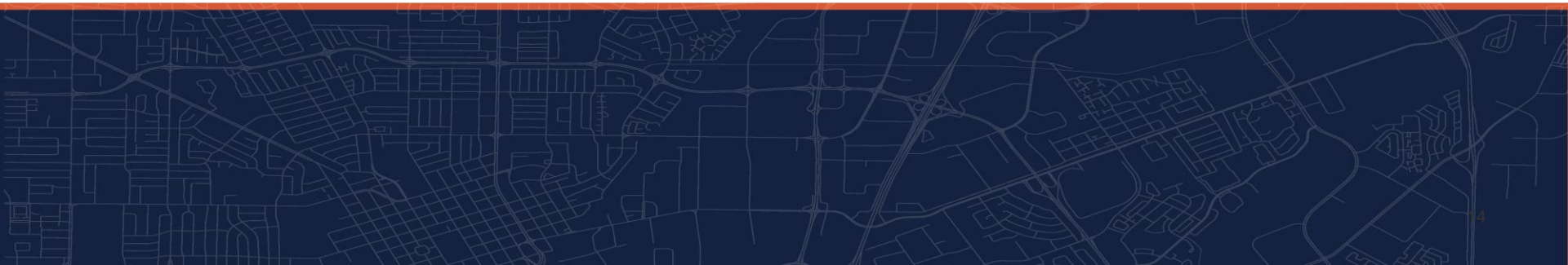
Recommendation

- 1) Determine** the project to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3 - “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures”).
- 2) Adopt a resolution approving a Conditional Use Permit** to allow for construction of a single-sided digital LED billboard as part of a Billboard Relocation Agreement, located at 1700 Duane Avenue, subject to findings and conditions of approval.
- 3) Adopt a resolution approving a minor modification** to reduce the required 1,500 linear feet distance from another electronic digital display message sign, located at 1700 Duane Avenue, subject to findings and conditions of approval.
- 4) Recommend to the City Council approval** of the Billboard Relocation Agreement.



City of Santa Clara

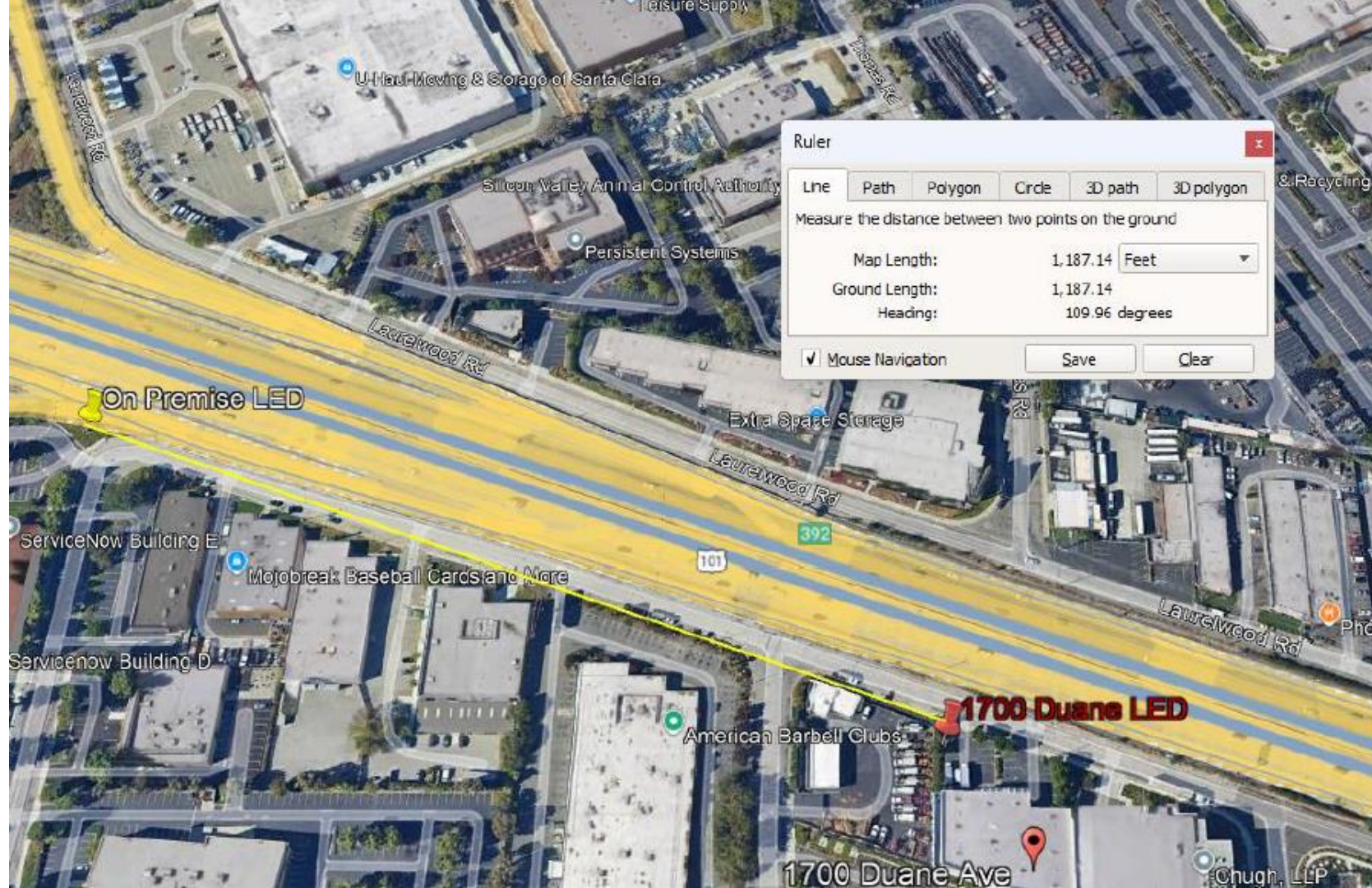
The Center of What's Possible





Minor Modifications

- City's Sign standards, per Section 18.42.140.F.3 (Separation), require a 1,500 linear foot separation distance from another electronic digital display message sign.
- A Minor Modification can be used to reduce the required 1,500 linear feet separation by up to 25%, which would result in a minimum separation of 1,125 linear feet.
- The Minor Modification request is referred to the Planning Commission for consideration per Section 18.124.040.C.2.
- Granting the Minor Modification will result in development consistent with the adjoining properties and City Council policy as the Billboard Relocation Agreement proposes to remove billboard faces from El Camino Real and locate a new billboard along US Highway 101.



Ruler

Line Path Polygon Circle 3D path 3D polygon

Measure the distance between two points on the ground

Map Length: 1,187.14 Feet

Ground Length: 1,187.14

Heading: 109.96 degrees

☒ Mouse Navigation Save Clear

