



Villa Marina Council

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September 28, 2022

Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Council Members:

I'm writing on behalf of 685 families who live in the Villa Marina community in Marina Del Rey, represented collectively by the Villa Marina Council. We have learned about the proposed Metro Transit Network Communication Program putting up digital billboards, including two at the intersection of the 90 Freeway and Culver Boulevard, in close proximity to our homes.

Councilmembers should be aware that of all the residents who have commented on this idea not a single one has expressed any support for the proposal. The response has been universally negative among our homeowners and renters, who have reviewed the suggested benefits and find that none stands up to scrutiny except the desire for revenue – and strongly object to selling off the environment surrounding the Ballona Wetlands for a share of advertising dollars.

Digital billboards along the freeway are very poor media for sharing information about road conditions or emergencies. There are other, safer and less disruptive methods already in place for doing so, including cell phone texts and emails that can be read and digested in more than an instant, when one is not driving at freeway speeds.

Because of their brightness and changing imagery, digital billboards are far more distracting to drivers than stationary billboards, and high speed makes a lapse in attention more dangerous. When the 90 Freeway comes to an intersection a few hundred feet further, cars run the light, causing accidents with the traffic on Mindanao Way. The greater distraction caused by a digital billboard would take an increased toll in accident victims and make our neighborhood less safe for drivers, passengers, and pedestrians.

The 90 Freeway is a poor choice of location for other reasons. The traffic moves very quickly, but the 90 is really a short stretch of roadway. Cars headed southwest at the proposed location are just about to exit the freeway, while those headed northeast frequently turn off after brief local trips. Digital billboards are distracting and uninformative over any freeway, but they seem particularly ill suited to the 90 at Culver Boulevard.

Light pollution in the city is an issue that will have to be addressed eventually by the Council, and the best time to address it is before additional electronic media are allowed on the skyline. A digital billboard creates constant visual “noise” that cannot be dialed down. We have seen what they have done to the look of rapidly developing cities or entertainment centers. Picture those changing images blinking through your curtains as you try to sleep, casting a digital glow over the Ballona Wetlands from a height above the freeway.

We are not alone in objecting to billboards in this proposed location. In his letter to Shine Ling of June 1, 2022, Councilmember Mike Bonin refers to these billboards (FF-29 and FF-30) and expresses concern over their proximity to the Ballona Wetlands, which he calls “the only State Ecological Reserve in Los Angeles County. Metro should seek input ... and analyze the aesthetic and biological impacts to visitors and wildlife of having illuminated advertising in such close proximity to the Ecological Reserve. The Ballona Wetlands are also a critical coastal resource under the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission. Both the resources themselves and the views of those resources from public roads are protected.”

We have read and endorsed the letter of August 2022 submitted by the Del Rey Residents Association, objecting to the plan to post digital billboards in our neighborhood. They have articulated a series of concerns raised by the project that have been echoed by our residents. We would add that exchanging digital billboards for static one is not an appropriate solution, nor a trade-off to be negotiated. Our residents oppose the two digital billboards proposed for our vicinity and believe that people living in other communities of the city are likely to feel just as strongly about billboards proposed for their neighborhoods. When static billboards come down, they should not be replaced with digital ones.

For the sake of safety, aesthetic concerns, and the landscape of our neighborhood, we urge the City Council to refrain from allowing digital billboards along the 90 freeway. On behalf of the 685 families comprising our residential community, the Villa Marina Council has voted to share with you the thoughts and feelings expressed in this letter.

Respectfully yours,

Villa Marina Council



By: Celinda Jungheim, Secretary
Marina Del Rey, California