



City of South San Francisco

City Council

Ordinance: ORD 1654-2024

P.O. Box 711 (City Hall, 400
Grand Avenue)
South San Francisco, CA

File Number: 24-315

Enactment Number: ORD 1654-2024

ORDINANCE AMENDING SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 20.360.004 (GENERAL STANDARDS FOR ALL SIGNS) TO ALLOW FOUR DIGITAL BILLBOARDS ALONG THE US 101 CORRIDOR.

WHEREAS, on October 12, 2022, the City Council for the City of South San Francisco (“City”) adopted a comprehensive update to the City’s Zoning Ordinance, which repealed the then-existing Title 20 of the South San Francisco Municipal Code, and replaced it with an entirely new Title 20 that, among other actions, established new zoning districts, revised and reformatted many then-existing zoning provisions, eliminated inconsistent and outdated provisions, and codified entirely new zoning provisions, including new land use regulations and development standards (“Zoning Ordinance”); and

WHEREAS, the City Council approved the City’s General Plan in 2022, including the 2040 General Plan Update, Zoning Code Amendments, and Climate Action Plan (“2040 General Plan EIR”), which articulates the vision for growth and development throughout the east of 101 area as well as the entire City through 2040; and

WHEREAS, the City Council certified an Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) on October 12, 2022 (State Clearinghouse number 2021020064) in accordance with the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, which analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the development of the 2040 General Plan Update, Zoning Code Amendments, and Climate Action Plan (“2040 General Plan EIR”), which analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the development east of 101; and

WHEREAS, the City Council also adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations (“SOC”) on October 12, 2022 in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, which carefully considered each significant and unavoidable impact identified in the 2040 General Plan EIR and found that the significant environmental impacts are acceptable in light of the project’s social, economic, and environmental benefits; and

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted an Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (“IS/MND”) on August 26, 2015 (State Clearinghouse number 2013062062) in accordance with the provision of CEQA and CEQA Guidelines, which analyzed the potential environmental impacts of billboards along the west side of U.S. Highway 101; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, an addendum to the IS/MND was prepared for the Outfront Media Digital Billboard Project (“2023 Addendum”) analyzing the potential impacts of billboards along the east side of U.S. Highway 101, which was considered and recommended to the City Council for approval by a separate resolution of the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, Section 20.360.004(F)(7)(j) requires that digital billboards shall only be allowed in a nonresidential district south of Sister Cities Boulevard and north of the City’s southern boundary, and shall be located on parcels immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 101 and shall not be allowed on parcels adjacent to San Bruno Mountain or in a location that significantly blocks views of San Bruno Mountain; and

WHEREAS, Section 20.360.004(F)(7)(a) currently limits the number of digital billboards within the City to no more than three digital billboards, with two faces each, and only pursuant to the approval of a relocation agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommended at their December 21, 2023 meeting that the City Council adopt an amendment to Section 20.360.004 of the South San Francisco Zoning Ordinance to allow four digital billboards along the US 101 corridor; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance as it relates to signage is minor in nature, the adoption of which would not result in any new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of any previously identified effects beyond those disclosed and analyzed in the 2040 General Plan EIR, 2015 IS/MND prepared and circulated for the siting of billboards along U.S. Highway 101, and 2023 Addendum; nor does the proposed amendment constitute a change in the project or change in circumstances that would require additional environmental review; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on December 21, 2023, to consider the proposed amendments and take public testimony and recommended that the City Council approve the amendments; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has considered approval of the entitlements and the CEQA document for the proposed Project by separate resolutions.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS.

SECTION I. FINDINGS.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that based on the entirety of the Record before it, which includes without limitation, CEQA and CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations § 15000,

et seq.; the South San Francisco General Plan and General Plan EIR, including all amendments and updates thereto; the South San Francisco Municipal Code, the draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment, the 2015 IS/MND and 2023 Addendum, and all appendices thereto, all reports, minutes, and public testimony submitted as part of the City Council meeting of March 13, 2024, and any other evidence (within the meaning of Public Resources Code § 21080(e) and § 21082.2) (“Record”), the City of South San Francisco City Council hereby finds as follows:

A. General Findings.

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and made a part of this Ordinance.

3. By separate resolution, an environmental determination has been approved in accordance with CEQA, finding that the 2023 Addendum to the 2015 IS/MND is the appropriate CEQA document for the proposed Zoning Text Amendment.

3. The documents and other material constituting the record for these proceedings are located at the Planning Division for the City of South San Francisco, 315 Maple Avenue, South San Francisco, CA 94080, and in the custody of the Chief Planner.

B. Zoning Text Amendment Findings

1. The zoning amendments are consistent with the adopted General Plan because they strengthen and promote economic development objectives and actively market South San Francisco. The proposed text amendments related to the regulation of the number of digital billboards permitted in the City along Highway 101 will remain consistent with the City’s General Plan vision for community and economic development and will not impede achievement of any of the goals, policies, or land use designations established in the General Plan.

2. The zoning amendments related to the number of digital billboards allowed in the City would only affect properties in non-residential districts adjacent to U.S. Highway 101 and have been designed to be appropriate for surrounding uses. The proposed standards would generally be suitable in terms of architectural compatibility, consistency with area character, legibility, readability, finish and visibility, and other considerations deemed relevant by City Council because appropriate performance standards for digital billboards, including operational limitations related to static messages, maximum lighting levels, a requirement for a light sensing device that adjusts the sign brightness as ambient light conditions change, and location limitations, have been included and would be applied to projects on a case-by-case basis to minimize visual impacts. The suitability for the potential digital billboard sites was appropriately analyzed in the applicable environmental documents.

3. The zoning amendments related to digital billboards would not result in any change of zoning districts and therefore would not be detrimental to the use of land in any adjacent zone.

SECTION II. AMENDMENTS.

The City Council amends the following section of the South San Francisco Municipal Code to read as follows (with text in ~~strikeout~~ indicating deletion and double underline indicating addition). Sections and subsections that are not amended by this Ordinance are not included below, and shall remain in full force and effect.

A. Amend Section 20.360.004(F)(7)(a) to allow four (instead of three) digital billboards along the US 101 corridor, as follows:

7.Digital Billboards. Digital Billboards are permitted pursuant to a relocation agreement under Section 20.360.002(A) above. Digital Billboards shall have the following operational limitations:

a. *Maximum Number of Signs and Faces.* Not more than ~~three~~ four digital billboards, with two faces each, may be allowed within the City, and must be pursuant to the approval of a relocation agreement under Section 20.360.003 [\(<https://library.qcode.us/lib/south_san_francisco_ca/pub/municipal_code/lookup/20.360.003>](https://library.qcode.us/lib/south_san_francisco_ca/pub/municipal_code/lookup/20.360.003)(A) (“Permits Required; Review Process”).

SECTION III. SEVERABILITY.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance, including the application of such section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase to other persons or circumstances, and the remaining portions of this Ordinance shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, provisions of this Ordinance are severable. The City Council of the City of South San Francisco hereby declares that it would have passed each section, subsection, subdivision, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase hereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, subdivisions, paragraphs, sentences, clauses, or phrases be held unconstitutional, invalid, or unenforceable.

SECTION IV. PUBLICATION AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

Pursuant to the provisions of Government Code Section 36933, a summary of this Ordinance shall be prepared by the City Attorney. At least five (5) days prior to the Council meeting at which this Ordinance is scheduled to be adopted, the City Clerk shall (1) publish the Summary, and (2) post in the City Clerk's Office a certified copy of this Ordinance. Within fifteen (15) days after the adoption of this Ordinance, the City Clerk shall (1) publish the summary, and (2) post in the City Clerk's Office a certified copy of the full text of this Ordinance along with the names of those City Council members

voting for and against this Ordinance or otherwise voting. This Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days from and after its adoption.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of South San Francisco held the 13th day of March, 2024.

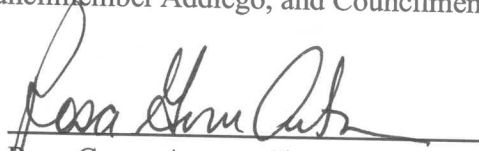
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At a meeting of the City Council on 3/27/2024, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Flores, seconded by Councilmember Nicolas, that this Ordinance be adopted. The motion passed.


Yes: 3 Mayor Coleman, Vice Mayor Flores, and Councilmember Nicolas

No: 2 Councilmember Addiego, and Councilmember Nagales

Attest by



Rosa Govea Acosta, City Clerk



James Coleman, Mayor