



March 28, 2023

Sent Via: E-Mail

Mayor Mark Arapostathis
Vice Mayor Colin Parent
Councilmember Patricia N. Dillard
Councilmember Laura Lothian
Councilmember Jack Shu

RE: City Council, March 28, 2023, Item 5.3, Digital Billboards

Dear Mayor Arapostathis, Vice Mayor Parent and Councilmembers:

As a representative of the new ownership of the Grossmont Shopping Center, Federal Realty, we would like to affirm our enthusiasm for this regional market and our hope to work with the City of La Mesa to preserve the conditions that allow the center to be successful and relevant in an evolving retail landscape. We've made a significant commitment with the purchase of this shopping center and a goal of continuing to serve the community with a diverse array of stores, restaurants and services. Good visibility and identifiable signage are tremendously important to traditional shopping center locations like Grossmont. Not only does the signage serve to identify the location of a retailer but it's also a regular reminder, to the passing consumer, of a store's presence and brand identity. On-site signage installations become even more valuable to retailers when they are on heavily trafficked freeway corridors like I-8.

Given the large volume of traffic on this stretch of freeway we certainly understand why an advertising company would be interested in placing eye-grabbing digital displays for commercial advertising purposes. However, Federal Realty believes that this proposal could prove to be to the detriment of Grossmont Shopping Center's marketability as a regional destination retail site. We believe that the two proposed sign locations on Murray Drive, that are separated by only about 1,100 feet, will impede the freeway view corridor in front of our property. Digital displays are also known for their extremely strong visual presence and these signs will dominate a driver's field of view for the 12 seconds that it takes to pass Grossmont Shopping Center at freeway speed. Our shopping center's static signs won't compete well for a driver's attention against the large, bright, digital displays that are being proposed. Please note that we support the non-commercial City sign that is included in this proposal.

This proposal also raises some questions for us as a party of interest. Is this sort of advertising opportunity only available to advertising companies that already own billboards that can be removed and leveraged to a more lucrative sign location? If so it seems that this arrangement allows for an inequitable competitive position for the few billboard companies to trade up



for better locations. Is “off-property” commercial advertising desirable at this location and does it project the right image for the City of La Mesa to the passing driver? Would Grossmont Shopping Center be awarded similar digital media rights to try to preserve our retailer’s signage and branding interests?

We urge the La Mesa City Council to consider the concerns raised in this correspondence during the review of the proposed digital billboard program.

Respectfully submitted,

Scot Vallee

Sr. Vice President, Western Regional Development