

City Planning Commission Meeting
Tuesday, January 13, 2015

CPC Deadline: 1/09/2015
CC Deadline: 45 days from
the receipt of the CPC report
Council District: D - Brossett

PRELIMINARY STAFF REPORT

To: City Planning Commission
Design Review: 157-14

Prepared by: Kelly G. Butler
Date: January 6, 2014

Applicant: LAMAR ADVERTISING OF NEW ORLEANS

Request: An appeal of the General Sign Regulations, **Article 12, Section 12.3** *Outdoor General Advertising and Certain Large Signs Prohibited* and **Article 12, Section 12.5.5. Spacing Along Freeways and Interstate Highways** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) to permit the installation of a new billboard adjacent to Interstate Highway 10.

Zoning: LI - Light Industrial District

Location: CSX Railroad property between the Interstate 10 right of way and the CSX Rail Line near Industry Street and St. Roch Avenue.

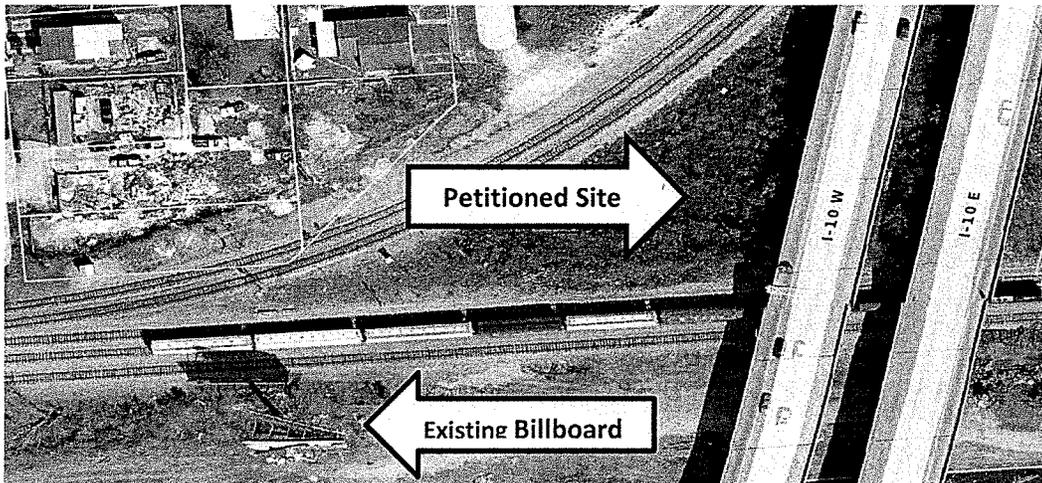
Proposal: The proposal calls for installation of a new, seventy (70') feet high, "V" shaped double faced billboard with each sign face measuring fourteen by forty-eight (14' x 48') feet, the maximum allowed. The billboard will be mounted on a single pole located adjacent to Interstate 10 near Industry Street on property owned by CSX Railroad. The applicant proposes to remove an existing double faced billboard approximately two hundred eighty-five (285) feet to the south.

Why is City Planning Commission action required?

In accordance with **Article 12, Section 12.5.11** of the CZO, any application for a variance of the Outdoor General Advertising Sign Regulations shall be submitted to the City Planning Commission for a recommendation before a final determination by the City Council.

I. EVALUATION

The applicant is requesting two (2) waivers of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to permit the construction of a new billboard. If approved, the applicant intends to remove an existing double faced non-conforming billboard located two hundred eighty-five (285') linear feet south of the proposed location.



Source: New Orleans Assessor's Map, accessed 12/11/14

The first requested waiver is of **Article 12, Section 12.3.1(1)**, which requires that all outdoor general advertising signs be located at a minimum of two hundred (200) feet away from major highways, as adopted by the Major Street Plan of the City of New Orleans. The proposed location of the billboard is approximately fifty-five (55) feet away from Interstate Highway 10. Therefore, a waiver of one hundred and forty-five (145) feet is requested.

The applicant is also requesting a variance of **Article 12, Section 12.5.5** which permits one billboard every 1,000 feet. The applicant is requesting a waiver to install a new billboard within 1,000 feet of four (4) existing billboards.¹ The closest billboard is four hundred and fifty-six (456) feet away; the second billboard is four hundred and sixty-four (464) feet away, the third billboard is six hundred forty-four (644) feet away, while the fourth billboard is nine hundred and seven (907) feet away.² The Outdoor General Advertising Sign regulations are designed to reduce the proliferation of excessive signage while preventing obstruction of the view of the City's skyline. The spacing standards, when not waived, have successfully prevented excessive billboards along interstates and expressways throughout the City. This requirement should be maintained and this waiver should not be granted.

Sign Face and Spacing Comparison: Existing and Proposed Billboard

In accordance with **Article 12, Section 12.5.4.3a – Design Criteria** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, the existing non-conforming billboard's two faces are larger than what is currently permitted as each sign face measures twenty (20') feet by sixty (60') feet for a total sign face area of two thousand four hundred square feet ($20 \times 60 \times 2 = 2,400$ sq. ft.). The proposed new billboard will meet the maximum permitted sign face area as each face will measure fourteen (14') feet by forty-eight (48') feet for a total sign face area of one thousand

¹ The fourth billboard is located nine hundred and seven (907) feet away, which is within one thousand (1,000) feet, but is setback two hundred eighty-two (282) feet from the interstate. Though it not situated directly adjacent to the highway, the staff believes it is still intended to be viewed by drivers accessing the interstate, therefore it is correct to include this billboard in the review.

² This was measured using the City's geographical information systems database. See attached document included at the end of this report.

three hundred forty-four square feet (14 x 48 x 2 = 1,344 sq. ft). This is a difference of one thousand fifty-six (1,056 sq. ft.) square feet in sign face area.

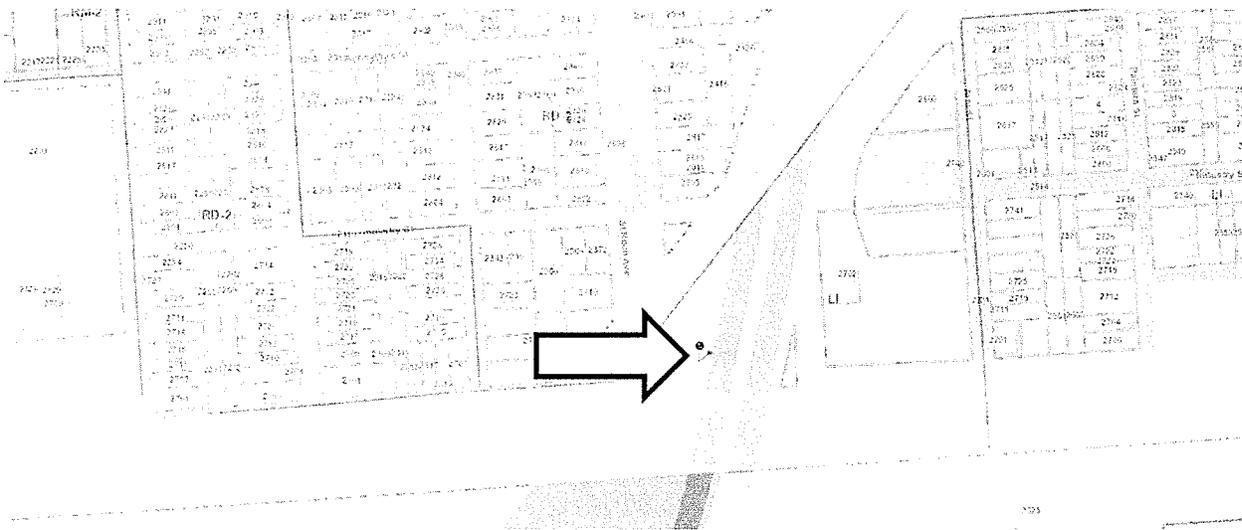
As mentioned above, the existing billboard is located approximately two hundred eighty-five feet south of the location of the proposed new billboard. **Article 12, Section 12.5.5 – Spacing Along Freeways and Interstate Highways** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows one (1) billboard structure every one thousand (1,000') feet on either side of the roadway or the other, but not on both sides. The existing billboard is located approximately seven hundred thirty (730') feet from a billboard located on the same western side of I-10 and is located approximately five hundred ten (510') feet, seven hundred sixteen (716'), and one thousand one hundred seventeen (1,117') feet from the three (3) billboards on the opposite eastern side of I-10. The proposed new billboard would be on the same western side as the existing billboard and would be located nine hundred nine (909') feet from the billboard on the western side of I-10. In addition, the new billboard would be located four hundred fifty six (456') feet, four hundred sixty four (464') feet, and six hundred forty four (644') feet from the three billboards on the eastern side of I-103.

Finally, **Article 12, Section 12.3.1.1. – Subdistrict Regulations** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, prohibits placement of billboards along highways within two hundred (200) feet of the grade separation. The existing billboard is currently one hundred thirty five (135') feet from the grade separation of I-10 while the proposed new billboard would be located fifty-five (55') feet from the grade separation of I-10.

Analysis

The applicant is proposing to remove an existing non-conforming billboard and replacing it with a billboard that reduces the square footage and meets the billboard sign face requirements, but is still out of compliance in regards to spacing. The reduction of one thousand fifty-six (1,056 sq. ft.) of signage area could be seen as positive, but taking into consideration that moving the billboard two hundred eighty five (285') feet to the north puts the new billboard in closer proximity to other billboards and creates more of a signage cluster in this section of I-10. This creates more of an unpleasant aesthetic than the reduction in square footage. Also, both the existing and proposed locations are within two hundred (200') feet of the grade separation of the highway. The staff does not believe moving the billboard closer to the highway will benefit the area, instead; the staff believes it will add to the visual clutter along I-10.

The area directly surrounding the site contains the interstate and a rail line, however; there is a Two-Family Residential District abutting the petitioned site. By permitting an additional billboard, this will only prove to be detrimental to the surrounding area. The staff strongly supports adherence to the outdoor general advertising sign regulations and believes granting the waivers will encourage additional signage. The current regulations have been agreed upon with billboard industry representatives as a result of a ten (10) year effort to draft regulations. The staff continues to recommend adherence to these established standards to curb the proliferation of excessive signage through-out the City.



Though the *Plan for the 21st Century*, commonly known as the Master Plan does not specifically address general advertising signage, “Chapter 14: Land Use Plan” of the Master Plan designates the future land use of the petitioned site as “Industrial”, which would most likely include general advertising as a permitted use. The goal, range of uses, and development character for that designation are copied below:

Goal: Retain land to further strengthen port activity, maritime-related activities, manufacturing and other uses that provide jobs and opportunities for New Orleans’ residents.

Range of Uses: Heavy manufacturing, maritime uses, water treatment and transfer and large warehousing/distribution facilities.

Development Character: Often located near rail and highway infrastructure, massing and bulk will vary depending on location, however, proper buffers/standards required, particularly when abutting residential neighborhoods.

Although the proposed billboard is consistent with the *Plan for the 21st Century*, the zoning regulations of the LI Light Industrial District in the City’s Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance still apply. Both the current and draft zoning ordinances regulate spacing along interstate highways for which this request does not comply.

II. RECOMMENDATION⁴

The design review staff recommends **denial** of the requested waiver.

⁴ Subject to modification by the City Planning Commission.

III. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. The billboard installation will add visual clutter to an important major highway.
2. The billboard installation to replace an existing billboard does not negate the proliferation of billboards at this location.

City of New Orleans Property Viewer

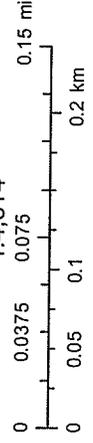


December 18, 2014



Override 1

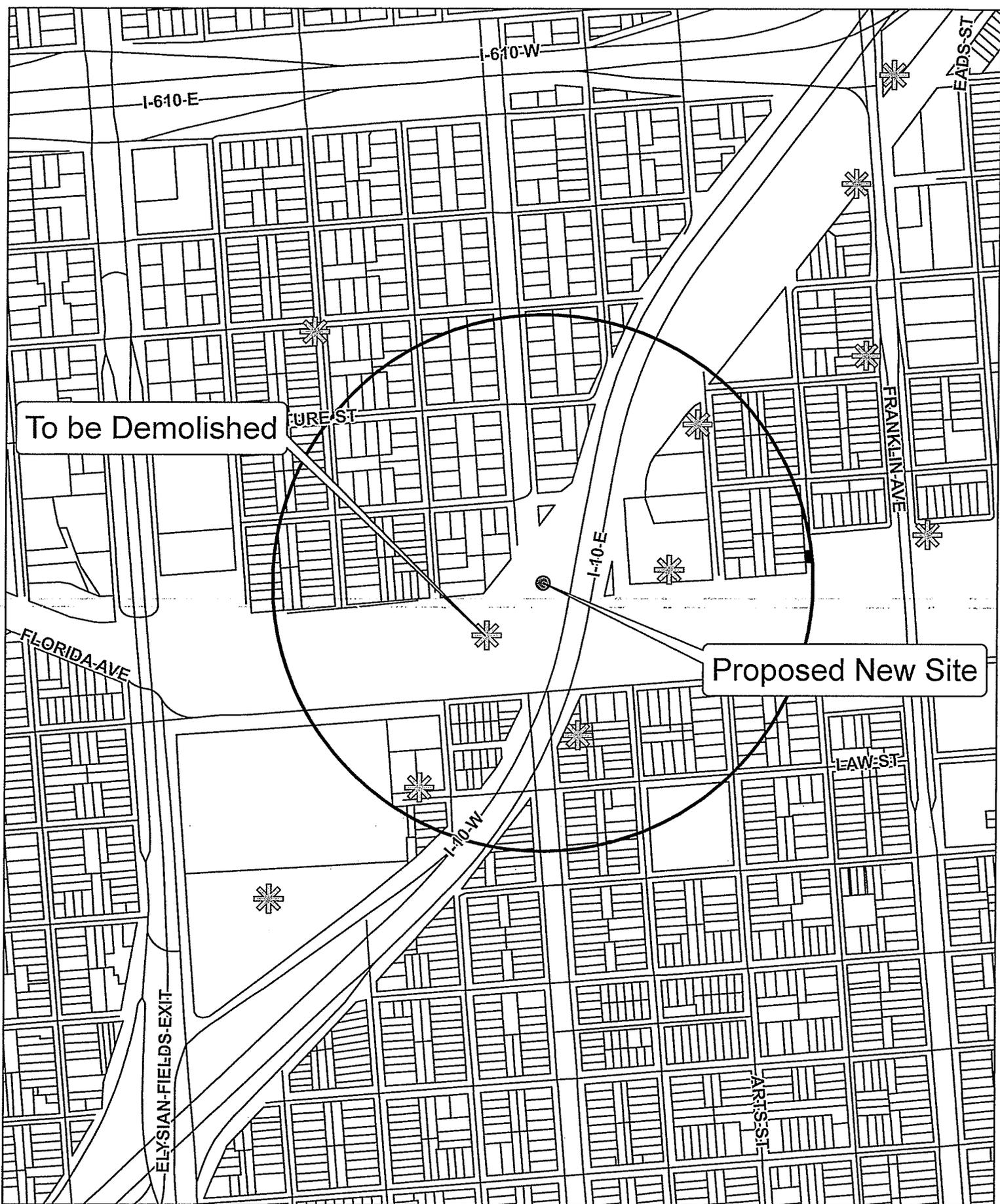
1:4,514



Design Review 157-14



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Legend

-  1,000 Feet Buffer
-  Current Existing Billboards

Design Review 157-14



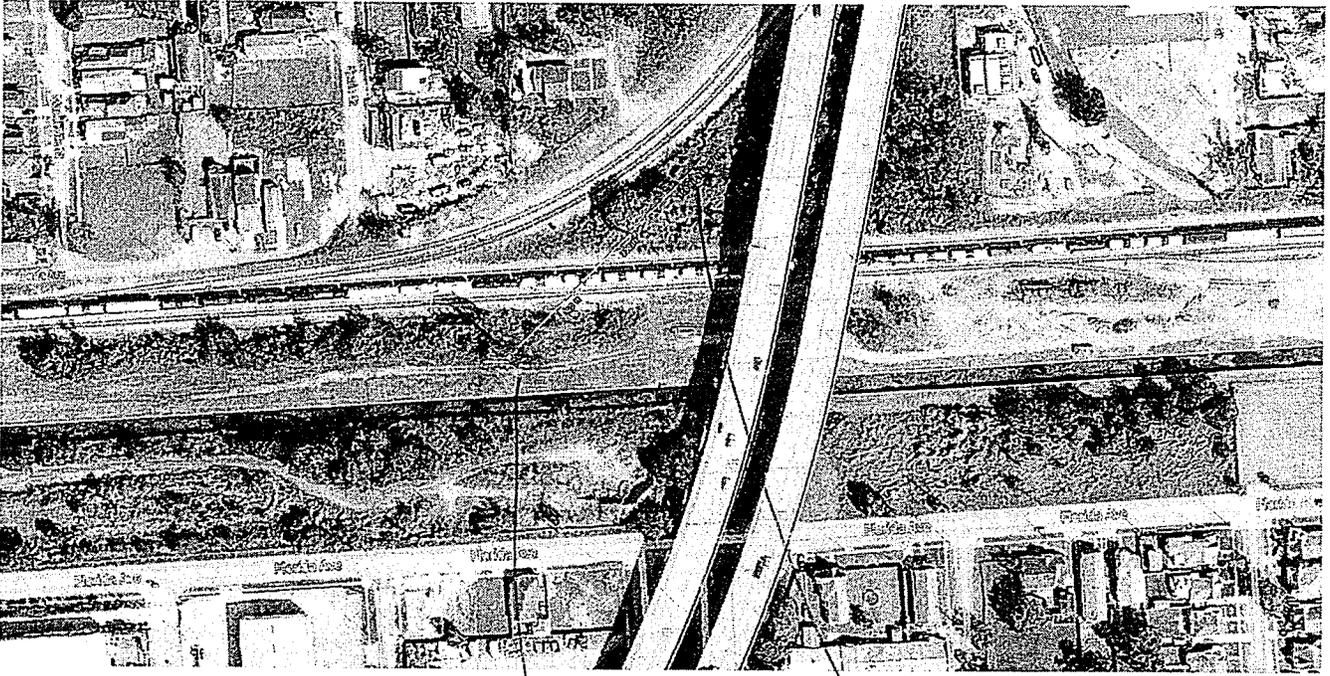


Potential area to relocate. Would be very close to the 1000' spacing from CBS single face.

CBS Single face

0 210 420 630 840 ft

Orleans Parish makes every effort to produce the most accurate information possible. No warranties, expressed or implied, are provided for the data herein, its use or interpretation. The assessment information is from the last certified taxroll. All data is subject to change before the next certified taxroll.
Date printed: 07/17/14 : 11:56:43



EXISTING
SIGN

REQUESTED
RELOCATION
spot

RELOCATION
AREA

EXISTING LAMAR SIGN



EXISTING LAMAR SIGN and
AREA FOR REQUESTED RELOCATION

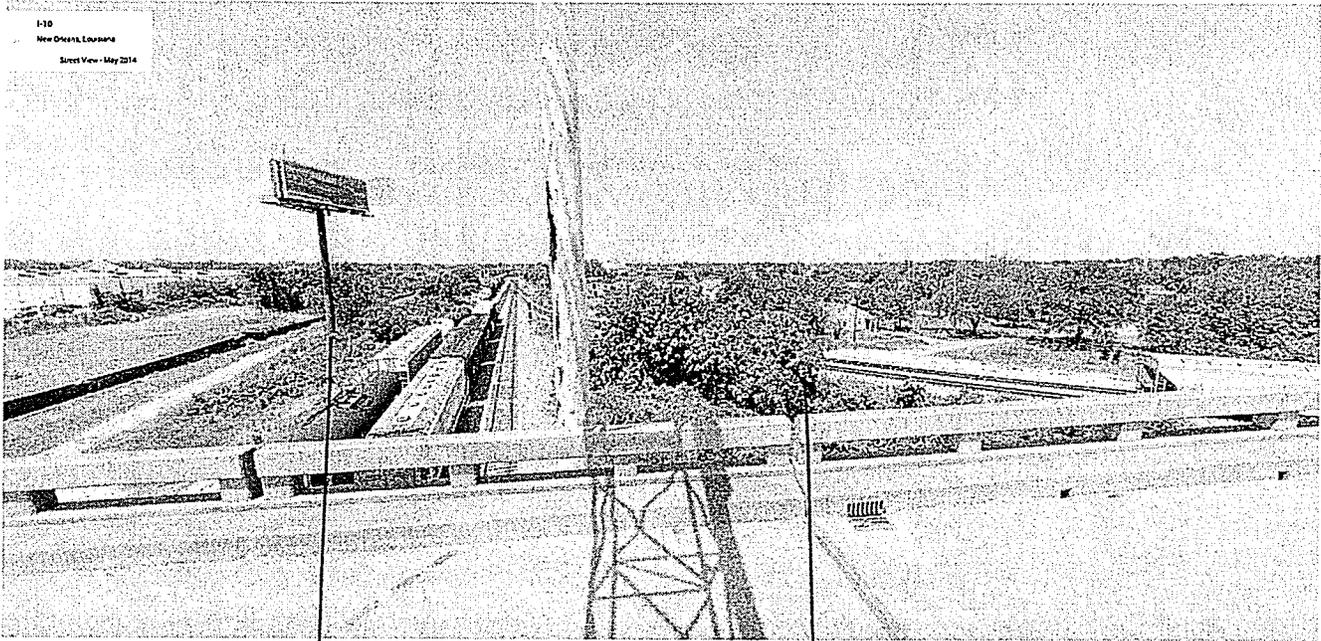
EXISTING SIGN: 70' OVERALL HEIGHT. SIGN FACES MEASURE 20' x 60'

RELOCATION
AREA



LAMAR REQUESTED RELOCATION AREA

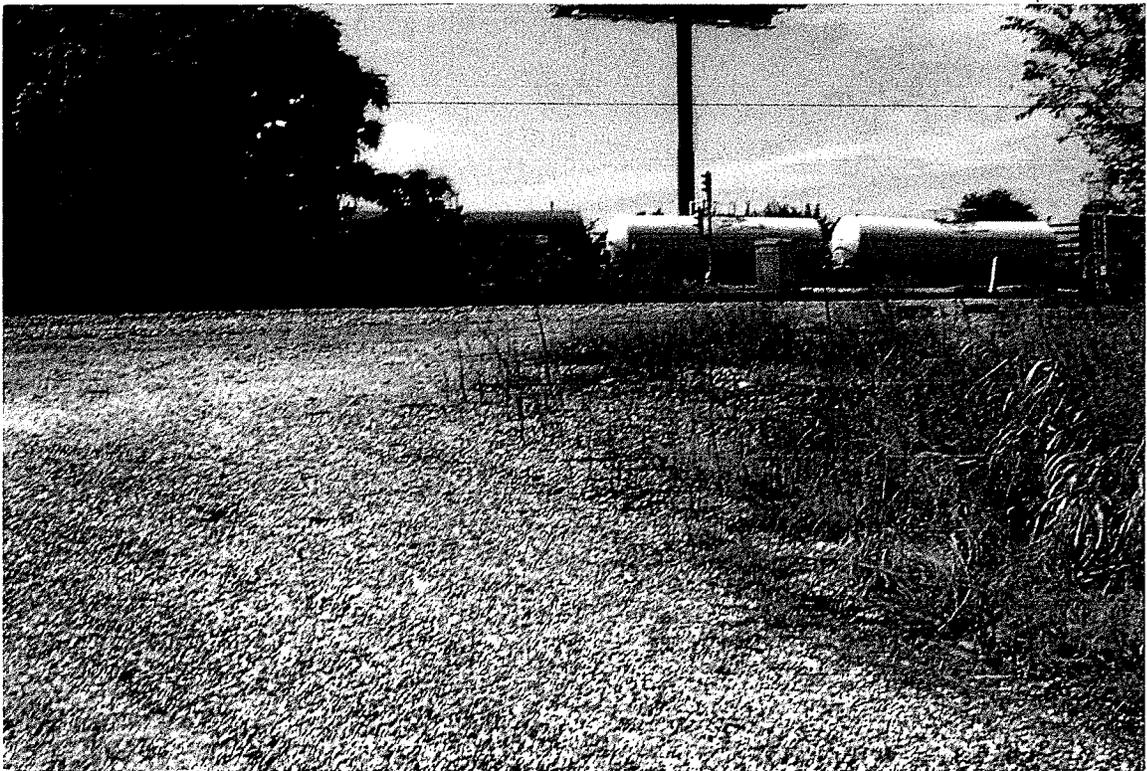
NEW, RELOCATED SIGN : 70' OVERALL HEIGHT, SIGN FACES
MEASURE 14' X 49'



285'

EXISTING
SIGN

REQUESTED
RELOCATION
SPOT



14 August 2014

Marco Outdoor Advertising, Inc. was acquired by The Lamar Companies dba Lamar Advertising on August 4, 2014. In order to improve the visibility of one of the existing Marco billboard structures Lamar would like to relocate the structure. The net effect is zero; that is, 1 structure with 2 advertising faces. The current ad faces measure 20' x 60'. The relocated structure faces will be smaller, measuring 14' x 48'. The difference in the total footage of the sign faces is a reduction of 1,056 square feet. As listed below, all other regulatory items remain essentially the same.

Zoning classification: Light Industrial

Project: Relocate existing billboard structure (I-10 @ Florida Ave) 285 linear feet North.
Structure is currently set back 135' from I-10; relocation spot to be set back 55' from I-10.

Relocated structure will be at least 1,000 linear feet from other billboards on the same side of I-10. Existing structure is currently 730 linear feet from an existing structure on the same side of I-10. Relocated structure will be within 1,000 linear feet of 3 other billboard structures on the opposite side of I-10: CBS structure 644 linear feet away; Marco (Lamar) structure 464 linear feet away; and CBS structure 456 linear feet away. Existing structure is currently within 1,000 linear feet of 3 other billboard structures on the opposite side of I-10: CBS structure 374 linear feet; Marco (Lamar) structure 734 linear feet away; CBS structure 186 linear feet away.

Waiver requests for this item:

- 1) To be located within 200' of I-10 (as it currently already is)
- 2) To be located within 1,000 linear feet of 3 other billboard structures on the *opposite* side of I-10 (as it currently already is)