

**From:** [Daniel Wilson](#)  
**To:** [\\*Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager](#)  
**Subject:** Comment Concerning Digital Signs (9/21 Public Hearing)  
**Date:** Monday, September 21, 2020 5:30:13 PM

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[EXTERNAL ]

Hello-

I write concerning to the updates to codes for digital signs.

I am a Eugene resident very concerned about distracted driving. Our highest priority needs to be on keeping residents and visitors safe, especially those most vulnerable. I fear that digital signs changing their messages, even once every ten seconds, would be cause for drivers to take their attention away from the driving task. Any advertising at all along roadways is specifically intended to take away attention from the road, which in itself is not acceptable. Let's not make our streets even more dangerous.

I also have a concern about lighting the signs. The proposal makes mention of altering the illumination at night. Does that mean it will get brighter or dimmer at night? I am concerned about bright signs at night along I-5 and other roadways that could adjust driver's vision away from the range that allows them to see and react to road hazards.

I appreciate your work; thank you.

Daniel Wilson  
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## DRAGOVICH Jenessa L

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**From:** Claire Roth <claire@best-oregon.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 21, 2020 6:10 PM  
**To:** \*Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager; DRAGOVICH Jenessa L  
**Subject:** Testimony submission for Eugene City Council meeting: Ordinance on Digital Sign Code  
**Attachments:** BEST ECC Digital Signs 2020-09-21.pdf

[EXTERNAL 

Hello,

Please see BEST's written testimony PDF attached to this email, submitted for review prior to the Ordinance on Digital Sign Code item discussion during tonight's City Council meeting.

Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Claire Roth

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**Claire F. Roth**

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Safe Streets Coordinator

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Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST)

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*BEST is building a successful community by bringing people together to promote transportation options, safe streets, and walkable neighborhoods.*





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September 21, 2020

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Eugene Mayor, City Council & City Manager  
125 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Eugene, OR 97401

### Re: Ordinance Concerning Digital Sign Code<sup>1</sup>

Dear Mayor, City Council & City Manager:

As an advocate for transportation safety for all members of our community, it is the aim of Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST) to stay informed on all changes to our roadways that may affect the level of safety for those traveling on our streets.

Recently, BEST became aware of the City of Eugene's work towards citywide land use code amendment to modify existing sign standards to allow various digital signs. In doing our due diligence to examine the effects of possible changes made in close proximity to our roadways, BEST staff has done some research on digital signs to help educate ourselves and the City of Eugene in any action moving forward. BEST staff has condensed points of interest in the bullet points below, in addition to providing sources following each point.

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the amount of time considered to be a distraction from driving (inattention to the roadway and surroundings) is only 2 seconds. Furthermore, the organization stated that the odds of a crash double if the driver's eyes are distracted for more than 2 seconds. "In 2016, more than 9 percent of United States traffic deaths—or 3,450—were linked to distracted driving."<sup>2</sup>
- A 2006 study conducted by Virginia Tech for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that 80 percent of all crashes involve drivers taking their eyes away from the roadway for just about 3 seconds prior to the crash. Brighter, more visible signage, such as that found with digital signs, could have the propensity to distract drivers from the roadway, especially during evening hours where they may appear brighter.<sup>3</sup>
- A 2012 study conducted by researchers at the Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute found that drivers looked at digital signs significantly longer than at non-digital signs while driving down a roadway. The time taken to look at digital signs was approximately the same amount of distracted seconds 80 percent of crashes occur at. As a result of this study's findings, the Swedish government removed all digital signs.<sup>4</sup>

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- Emerging technologies within the digital sign conversation speak to what could be referred to as targeted driver distraction. Though not in every case with digital signs, some have the propensity to display ads during specific times of traffic flow; i.e., a digital sign displaying food images close to dinner time when traffic is heavy and flashing quicker images when there is lighter traffic. Even if they do not start out as advanced as in other locations, the possibility (and promise) of evolving technologies should be considered in moving forward with the conversation on implementation of digital signs.<sup>5</sup>
- The impact of digital advertising on different age groups of drivers should also be taken into consideration. A study conducted in 2019 found that younger drivers pay more attention to roadside advertising. This becomes more significant when coupled with the following 2017 statistic from the CDC, “The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among teens aged 16–19 than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers in this age group are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash.”<sup>6,7</sup>

Thank you for your time, and please don’t hesitate to reach out if any questions or comments should arise.

For BEST,

*Claire Roth*

Claire Roth  
Safe Streets Coordinator  
(650) 416-4802  
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<sup>1</sup> An Ordinance Concerning Digital Sign Code, Amending Sections 9.0500, 9.6610, 9.6615, 9.6620, 9.6630, 9.6635, 9.6640, 9.6645, 9.6650, 9.6655, 9.6660, 9.6665, 9.6670, 9.6675, and 9.6680 of the Eugene Code, 1971, and Providing an Effective Date.

<sup>2</sup> “2-Second Rule for Distracted Driving Can Mean Life or Death,” *New York Times*, 9/27/2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/27/business/distracted-driving-auto-industry.html>.

<sup>3</sup> “Swedish Study Shows Digital Billboards Distract Drivers,” Scenic America, <https://www.scenic.org/sign-control/digital-billboards/swedish-digital-billboard-study/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Oscar Oviedo-Trespalacios, Verity Truelove, Barry Watson, Jane A. Hinton, “The impact of road advertising signs on driver behaviour and implications for road safety: A critical systematic review,” *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 122 (2019): 85–98, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2019.01.012>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> “Teen Drivers: Get the Facts,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen\\_drivers/teendriversonfactsheet.html](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendriversonfactsheet.html).