

# BUSINESS

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## ADVERTISING & MARKETING

### Developer to Place Video Billboard on Sunset Strip

■ **Real estate:** Giant sign will be part of a new complex with a cafe, newsstand, apartments.

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SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

A local developer unveiled plans this week for a giant video billboard to entertain passersby on the Sunset Strip—the first such sign to hit the popular night-life area since the Billboard Live music club closed its doors and took down its signature Sony Jumbotron signs late last year.

Sunset View Plaza, at Sunset Boulevard and De Longpre Avenue, was approved by the city of West

Hollywood earlier this year and will consist of a cafe, newsstand, two electronic billboards and a nine-unit apartment complex.

The \$2-million project is scheduled to break ground this summer for an April opening, said developer Joseph Shooshani. However, he hopes to have the video screens in operation by the end of the year to add a Times Square ambience to the strip on New Year's Eve. One of the world's largest Jumbotrons looms over New York's famous intersection, where it sucks down 70 kilowatts of electricity per hour.

Shooshani's main sign will cover 450 square feet and face traffic. A smaller screen will be aimed at people walking through the plaza. The Jumbotrons would be one of only a handful of video billboards

in the country not in a stadium. But they could have company on the mile-and-a-half-long Sunset Strip, where giant billboards grace the sides of buildings, and 2 million cars pass monthly. The new Sunset Specific Plan allows for Shooshani's electric signs and two others.

In most other cities around the nation, the colorful video billboards are taboo, experts say. Many municipalities restrict standard billboards, much less approve giant displays with flashing images, said David Bryman, senior vice president with Western International Media.

"Not every community will allow changing messages on the roadways. They don't like the movement or the height," Bryman said. Plus, he said, the electronic monsters are scarce because

they're so expensive to build and operate. A large amount of advertising has to be sold to support the cost. "If it were extremely profitable, you'd see more of them," Bryman said.

Shooshani said he is undeterred by the financial challenge. He plans to target entertainment companies that will market movies, soda or clothing from the electronic signs, which will run continuously from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. He will also display public arts programming.

He said he had limited options for the vacant site because of its small size. It's only 75 feet wide and 100 feet deep.

"It's not even wide enough for cars to get in," he said. "Nothing else made any economic sense."