



# City Commission Agenda Report

City of Kalamazoo

Date: **9/5/2023**

Item: **G.7.**

**TO:** Mayor Anderson, Vice Mayor Cooney, and City Commissioners

**FROM:** James K. Ritsema, ICMA-CM, City Manager  
Reviewed by: Christina Anderson, City Planner/Deputy Director of CPED  
Prepared by: Pete Eldridge, Zoning Administrator

**DATE:** September 5, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Off-Premises Sign Agreement with Adams Outdoor Advertising

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Commission approve the Off-Premises Sign Agreement with Adams Outdoor Advertising to allow for the removal of a billboard in the Northside Neighborhood and the reconstruction of a billboard along I-94.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Adams Outdoor has had a billboard on the railroad parcel adjacent to 4141 Manchester Avenue since the mid- 1960's. This billboard location is on the south side of I-94 between Fabri-Kal Corporation on Manchester Avenue and The Wings Event Center off Vanrick Drive. Around August 30, 2022, straight line winds toppled this billboard. During this same period, Economic Development staff had been working with Adams Outdoor to resolve an easement issue with a parcel purchased for redevelopment in the Northside Neighborhood. The easement in place was intended for maintaining the billboard at the corner of E. Frank Street and N. Westnedge Avenue. However, the easement language was such that it encumbered the entire parcel and needed to be amended to allow redevelopment efforts to move forward on the remaining site area adjacent to the billboard.

Adams Outdoor and City staff discussed the situation and looked at the zoning of the two sites. The location in the Northside Neighborhood is zoned Live Work -1 District (LW-1). This district zone does not allow for off-premises signs or billboards. Therefore, this existing billboard is a nonconforming use. City staff stressed efforts made over the last 20 years to reduce the number of billboards in the neighborhoods and focus this type of advertisement signage on high traffic commercial corridors and along highways. The proposed billboard Adams Outdoor would like to reconstruct is in the Manufacturing Zone District (M-2) where off-premises signs or billboards are a permitted use. However, the city has a limit on off-premises signs or billboards of 99 and at the present time there are approximately 108. Due to the cap on the number of billboards and building setback requirements, the toppled billboard near I-94 cannot

be reconstructed per the Zoning Ordinance.

This Off-Premise Sign Agreement has resulted from these two projects. The agreement requires that Adams Outdoor remove the easement for the corner lot known as 802 N. Westnedge Avenue and remove the entire billboard and support structure located on the parcel. This will allow for the redevelopment of all three parcels at this corner owned by the City, which is approximately .5 acres. The City will authorize the reconstruction of the toppled billboard along I-94. This agreement will remove a billboard from the Northside Neighborhood.

Approval of the requested agreement is consistent with the purpose and intent of the sign regulations regarding ensuring that the number, size and location of signs do not create a negative impact on the image or aesthetic environment of the City.

### **STRATEGIC VISION ALIGNMENT:**

#### Strategic Goal Impact:

**Complete Neighborhoods** - residential areas that support the full range of people's daily needs

Approval of this agreement will result in the removal of a billboard located near residences and will allow for the stalled redevelopment of the corner of N. Westnedge Avenue and E. Frank Street to move forward, which will provide more job opportunities in the area.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

#### Appropriate Depth of Engagement:

**Inform (one-way conversation)** – no feasible alternatives available due to legal/regulatory restrictions, standards and best practices, or resource limitations; the community will be made aware of the project.

#### Engagement/Communication Tools:

This review process will involve a public hearing. Notice of this public hearing will be sent to all property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the subject properties and to the neighborhood associations these two properties are within.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Approval of this agreement will allow for redevelopment of property which will increase in taxable value as improvements are made. This agreement will also allow for the reconstruction of a billboard adjacent to 4141 Manchester Street, which will also be a taxable improvement to this parcel.