



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – PLANNING DIVISION
REPORT: 300 Maxim Road Conversion of Billboard to Dynamic Display
for consideration February 8, 2022

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission
PREPARED BY: Paul Ashworth, Senior Planner
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PROJECT: Billboard Electrification
30 Maxim Road
PARCEL ID: 329-077-001
P&Z-COMM-2022-0555

ZONE: ID-1; Connecticut River Overlay

TYPE: Special Permit to convert an existing static, large scale billboard to an LED dynamic display per Zoning Regulation 8.12.3.D.(2)

APPLICANT: OUTFRONT Media c/o Brian Roeser

OWNER: Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority



Overhead View - City of Hartford GIS 2022

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Application is for a Special Permit to allow for the conversion of one (1) billboard face from static to dynamic display. The subject billboard face is the eastern face of the two-sided billboard that is adjacent and directed towards Highway 5 south of the Charter Oak Bridge. The western face was previously approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission for conversion to dynamic display on September 28, 2021 (COMM-2021-0456). The current application is to convert the remaining eastern billboard face.

The subject property is not designated historic or within a historic district.

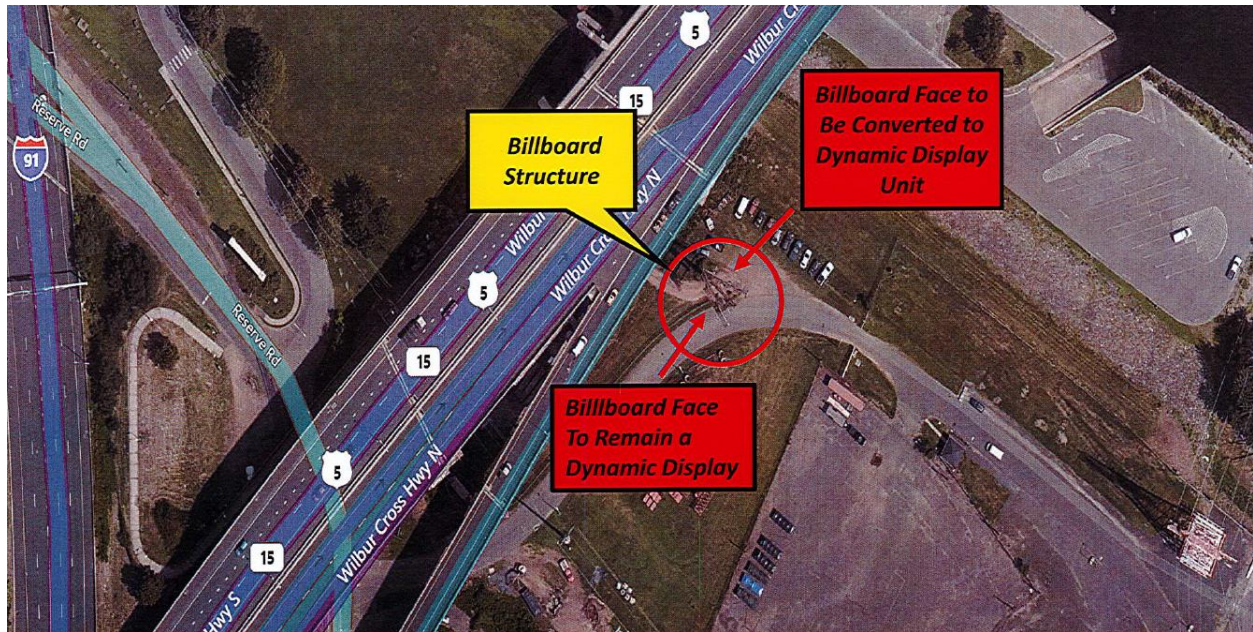


Figure 1. Conversion Diagram – OUTFRONT Media 2022

KEY APPLICATION TIMELINES

- Application Submission Date: December 23, 2021
- Date Application Accepted as Complete: December 23, 2021
- Application Date of Receipt: January 25, 2021 (sooner of either: date of next regularly scheduled meeting, or 35 days after acceptance of complete application)
- Public Hearing is scheduled to open on Tuesday, February 8, 2021; Open Hearing Deadline: March 31, 2021.
- Close Hearing Deadline (if opens February 8, 2021): (35 days after opening) Tuesday, March 15, 2021
- CT General Statutes Sec.8-7D allow that the applicant may consent to one or more extensions of time, provided the total extension of all time periods shall not be for longer than 65 days*.

LEGAL STANDARD

Standard for Application Type:

The Commission reviews special permits in accordance with Zoning Regulations section 1.3.4. Special permits may be approved, approved with conditions, or denied.

Considerations the Commission may weigh in special permit review include: harmony with the plan of conservation & development; compliance with the purposes of the district; effect on existing development; creation of safety hazards in vehicular and pedestrian circulation; effects on traffic; compatibility with adjacent properties; suitability of arrangement of buildings, open space, and provision of light and air; impact on essential services; impact on stormwater runoff; impact on city services and infrastructure; tree and landscape provision; and pedestrian amenities. The Commission may deviate from the minimum requirements for building siting, height, street facades, accessory structures dimensions, tree installation, landscape installation, buffers, fencing, lighting, parking, signage, and street design by up to 15% upon certain findings.

STANDARD SPECIFIC TO THE USE

Section 8.12.D.(2) Dynamic Displays and Billboards – An existing large-scale billboard with off-site advertising on property adjacent to or along and visible from I-91 or I-84 west of Park Street, may be converted to a dynamic display if the property owner applies for a special permit and in the judgement of the commission satisfies the special permit criteria of 1.3.4 and the following criteria, prior to the issuance of any such permit:

- (a) Does not locate such billboard within 500 feet of the city line; and
- (b) Either (i) removes another static billboard along I-91 and pays as follows (per face converted to dynamic display): for any permits issued in 2019, \$175,000 in to the complete streets fund, and for any permits issued after 2019, \$175,000 plus an additional \$25,000 increase each year after 2019; or (ii) pays as follows (per face converted to dynamic display): for any permits issued in 2019, \$300,000 plus an additional \$40,000 increase each year after 2019; and
- (c) Otherwise mitigates aesthetic issues and visual impact in the immediate vicinity as may be prescribed by the decision-making body during the special permit process; and
- (d) Provides the city with a minimum of 10 hours of advertising time each month of operation, which hours shall occur during the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., and facilitates all logistics related to the timely posting of such advertising with relevant city officials, such obligation reoccurring on an ongoing, monthly basis throughout the operation of the dynamic display, and such obligation being necessary to ensure continued validity of any permit issued therefor; and
- (e) Demonstrates that the proposed location, design, and operation of such billboard will not have a negative impact on public safety, especially in terms of the billboard's effect on traffic congestion, driver distraction, emergency services, and pollution, which negative impact is not otherwise mitigated by the payments tendered pursuant to 8.12.3.D.(2)(b).

FINDING OF FACTS

Lot Information

- Lot is over 55 acres in size.
- The lot abuts Highway 5 and the I-91 off-ramp to enter Highway 5 and cross the Charter Oak Bridge, with the sign mounting post approximately 36 feet from the right of way.
- The lot has frontage on Maxim Road and Reserve Road.

- The subject property is not a Protected Property, as defined by the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- The subject property is an industrial property that is home to a MIRA (Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority) facility. The site has one billboard structure, which is the structure proposed to be converted to a digital display as part of this application.

Proposed Dynamic Display Billboard Sign

- The sign has an overall height of 110 feet from grade.
- Sign face is 48' by 14' or 672 square feet.
- Applicant has stated the proposed sign is the same size and height as the existing sign.
- Approximately 750' linear feet from the nearest town line.
- Applicant has confirmed they will remove the northern face of a billboard visible from I-91 located at 101 Reserve Road as seen below in Figure 2.

The billboard located at 101 Reserve Road is located approximately 3,000 feet southwest of the subject property and adjacent to the east of I-91 and Route 5/15.

Billboard Face Removal For Dynamic Display Conversion



Figure 2. Billboard face to be removed – OUTFRONT Media 2022

COMMENTS RECEIVED (DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, NRZs, PUBLIC)

The subject property is not located within an NRZ boundary, so no notification was sent to an NRZ. Staff has not received any other comments as of this writing.

ANALYSIS

Section 8.12.3.D.(2) regulates the conversion of static large-scale billboards to dynamic display billboards. Within the introduction of the section it states that: “An existing large-scale billboard with off-site advertising on property adjacent to or along and visible from I-91 or I-84 west of Park Street, may be converted to a dynamic display.” The Commission determined that the west facing billboard, in their decision on September 28, 2021, was adjacent to I-91 because it is relatively within the I-91 corridor, adjacent to the ramp from I-91 to Highway 5, and visible from the specified I-91 offramp. The current request is in the same location and attached to the same support structure, and therefore staff find that it should also be considered adjacent to I-91.

Section 8.12.3.D.(2) regulates the conversion of static large-scale billboards to dynamic display billboards using criteria identified in the Regulations as (a) through (e). The proposed sign conversion meets the requirements of subsection (a) and (d) outright by virtue of the location of the subject billboard being more than 500 feet from the town line and the applicant’s agreement to provide the City a minimum 10 hours of advertising each month of operation.

Subsection (c) refers to aesthetic issues and visual impacts caused by the installation of the dynamic display. Staff has found no additional impacts caused by the dynamic display conversion. The new billboard is the same height and dimensions as the previously existing billboard and the dynamic nature of the display is regulated by Section 8.12 for safety, lighting and performance. The maximum brightness of a dynamic display during daylight hours permitted by the regulations is 5,000 nits. It is specifically stated in the regulations that the maximum brightness may be reduced by the Commission should it be found that the maximum brightness is inappropriate in that location or context. The applicant has provided a statement from the manufacturer confirming that the panels will be set not to exceed the 5,000 nit daytime maximum. The applicant also provided confirmation that the dynamic display panels will be equipped with a light sensor allowing them to self-dim in response to ambient conditions.

Subsection (e) requires that the Applicant demonstrate that the location, design and operation of the proposed dynamic display will not negatively impact public safety. Section 8.12 of the Regulations outlines regulations governing brightness, movement, screen transitions and safety equipment for dynamic displays meant to ensure that any negative impacts are mitigated or eliminated. The Applicant has confirmed that all the requirements of Section 8.12 regarding motion, brightness etc will be met. Staff finds the existing requirements of Section 8.12 will mitigate any negative impacts from the conversion to dynamic display.

Subsection (b), requires a payment to the complete streets fund which can be reduced by removing a billboard face within the City. The applicant’s submittal indicates the removal of a billboard face (#375B located at 101 Reserve Road) within the Interstate 91 corridor. As such, a condition of approval has been included reflecting the \$250,000 fee prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance in such cases.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this application with the following conditions:

1. Prior to the installation of the dynamic display, the billboard identified as 375B and located at 101 Reserve Road shall be removed from service;
2. Prior to the installation of the dynamic display a payment into the complete streets fund of \$250,000 shall be made; and
3. Prior to installation of the dynamic display the applicant shall enter into an agreement with the City providing the city with a minimum of 10 hours of advertising time each month of operation per Sec.8.12.

A draft resolution follows.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Application
2. Location Survey Dated October 29, 2020
3. NRZ Letter
4. Architectural Drawings Dated December 21, 2020

REVIEWED AND EDITED BY,

Aimee Chambers, Director



CITY OF HARTFORD
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RESOLUTION
300 MAXIM ROAD
SPECIAL PERMIT FOR CONVERSION OF BILLBOARD TO DYNAMIC DISPLAY

- Whereas,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the application and attached documents regarding the request for a special permit for the conversion of the easterly face of an existing large-scale billboard located at 300 Maxim Road to a dynamic display of the same size; and
- Whereas,** The Zoning Regulations permit the replacement of large-scale static billboards under certain conditions; and
- Whereas,** The Applicant will remove the northern face of a billboard visible from Interstate 91 and located at 101 Reserve Road and identified by OUTFRONT MEDIA as #375B; and
- Whereas,** The subject billboard is located approximately 750 feet from the nearest town line; and
- Whereas,** The Applicant will pay \$250,000 into the City of Hartford Complete Streets Fund consistent with the regulatory requirement for an application of this type issued in the year 2022; and
- Whereas,** Negative impacts of the installation of the dynamic display will be mitigated by the safety and performance requirements of Section 8.12 of the Regulations; and
- Whereas** The payment of \$250,000 into the complete streets fund will allow for safety and functionality improvements to the right-of-way consistent with the complete streets plan within the surrounding neighborhood; and

Now therefore Be It

- Resolved,** The City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission hereby **denies/approves** the request for a special permit for the conversion of the easterly face of an existing large-scale billboard located at 300 Maxim Road to a dynamic display of the same size subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the installation of the dynamic display, the billboard identified as 375B and located at 101 Reserve Road shall be removed from service;
2. Prior to the installation of the dynamic display a payment into the complete streets fund of \$250,000 shall be made; and
3. Prior to installation of the dynamic display the applicant shall enter into an agreement with the City providing the city with a minimum of 10 hours of advertising time each month of operation per Sec.8.12.

Be It Further,

Resolved, This 8th day of February, 2022.