CITY OF WASHINGTON

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

301 Walnut St. · Washington, IL 61571 Ph. 309-444-1124 · Fax 309-444-9779 http://www.washington-illinois.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Burdette and Planning and Zoning Commission FROM: Jon R. Oliphant, AICP, Planning & Development Director

Joe Boyer, Building & Zoning Coordinator

SUBJECT: Public Hearing – Request by Robinson Outdoor, LLC, for a Large Billboard Variance at 1230

Peoria Street

DATE: September 24, 2024

Zoning: C-2 (General Retail)

Comprehensive Plan: General Commercial

Summary: Robinson Outdoor, LLC, on behalf of Eagle Ridge Development Company, LLC, has submitted a variance application to allow a large billboard to be located at 1230 Peoria Street (PIN: 02-02-22-204-049). The property is zoned C-2 (General Retail). Large billboards are only allowed adjacent to roads with a maximum permissible speed limit of not less than 55 miles per hour. Additionally, the variance request includes the allowance for a large billboard to be located less than 20 feet from the property line and for the allowance of a large billboard to be located within less than 500 feet from the nearest lot line of any residential zoned lot. Staff recommends denial as indicated below.

Background: The subject property is located at the southeast corner of Eagle Avenue and Peoria Street (US Business Route 24) and is approximately 0.72 acres in size. Todd's Servicenter was located on the property for decades prior to its demolition in 2021. The property has been vacant since. BR 24 is the long-established primary commercial corridor in Washington. Eagle was extended to the south approximately 400' in 2022. As a result, future access to the parcel would likely come from Eagle. Because BR 24 is under the jurisdiction of IDOT, it would need to issue a permit from its Outdoor Advertising Department in Springfield independent of the potential approval of the variance request.

Robinson Outdoor proposes the placement of a 10'x20' electronic digital billboard approximately 16' from the intersecting front property lines abutting Eagle and Peoria. The bottom of the sign would be placed 20' above grade level. As a result, the peak height of the proposed billboard would be 30'. The zoning code classifies a large billboard as "a sign which advertises goods, products, or services not sold on the premises on which the sign is located up to a maximum of six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet." A small billboard, by comparison, is also an off-premise sign that advertises goods, products, or services not sold on the premises on which the sign is located but they can only be a maximum of 64 square feet in size.

Attached with this memo is Chapter 154.154(B) of the zoning code, which identifies the regulations for large billboards in the city limits. Among the parameters is that such billboards are only allowed adjacent to highways or roads where the maximum permissible speed limit is not less than 55 miles per hour. The section of BR 24 where the subject billboard is proposed has a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. While large billboards can be up to 30' in height, the maximum allowable height for a ground sign at this location is 25' as a property in the C-2 zoning district. Any large billboard must be placed at least 20' from any property lines. This sign is proposed to be approximately 16' from both front (north and west) property lines. Additionally, a large billboard must be located at least 500' from the nearest lot line of any residential zoned lot or any lot used for residential purposes. The proposed location is approximately 394' from the nearest residential zoned lot at 1103 Eagle.

Staff has some concerns regarding the proposed location as well as the placement of any billboards near corridors that do not allow for such off-premise signs. The proposed size, 200 square feet, while less than the maximum allowable large billboard size, is greater than the 160 square foot maximum for a ground sign. Moreover, most ground signs along the BR 24 corridor are less than half the size of this proposed billboard. Its

size would dwarf many of those existing signs. It would be 30' in height and most of the ground signs through this corridor are 20' in height or lower.

Billboards are intended to draw the attention of motor vehicle traffic to the displayed message. This location is at a signalized intersection that experiences peak traffic volumes in the morning and afternoon when Central Intermediate and Primary Schools are in session. The most recent (2023) annual average daily traffic at the intersection is 16,200, which does not include the section of Eagle to the south of BR 24. Additionally, Washington Community High School is nearby and it adds to the volume. The area also experiences increased pedestrian activity frequenting the businesses on BR 24, which could result in more accidents. The vast majority of all traffic incidents reported by the Washington Police Department occur on BR 24 to the west of Wilmor Road once it widens to four lanes.

The petitioner has indicated that the billboard would "allow for the property to be developed in a first-class manner." While the property's location gives it demand for non-residential development, staff feels that a billboard would inhibit its development potential. Finally, the proposed sign would detract from the aesthetics of the corridor. Among the placemaking strategies within the 2023 Comprehensive Plan is to initiate a façade improvement program along BR 24, which is intended to make the corridor more inviting to residents and visitors to the city.

To summarize, the variance request includes three components:

- 1. The allowance for a large billboard adjacent to a road with a maximum permissible speed limit of less than 55 miles per hour;
- 2. The allowance for a large billboard to be located less than 20 feet from the property line; and
- 3. The allowance for a large billboard to be located within less than 500 feet from the nearest lot line of any residential zoned lot.

Staff recommends denial of the variance request to allow a large billboard at 1230 Peoria Street. While digital billboards can provide useful community information, that is offset by the potential detrimental impacts. A public hearing will be held by the Planning and Zoning Commission at their meeting on Wednesday, October 2, 2024. The PZC is an advisory body for this case and its recommendation will be brought to the City Council for its consideration as part of a first reading ordinance at an upcoming meeting.

§ 154.154 BILLBOARDS

- (A) Billboards of the following three (3) types shall be allowed:
 - (1) Poster panels or bulletins normally mounted on a building wall, roof, or free-standing structure with advertising copy in the form of pasted paper;
 - (2) Multi-prism signs alternating advertising messages on one (1) displayed area; and
 - (3) Painted bulletins, where the advertisers message is painted directly on a wall-mounted, roof, or free-standing display area.
- (B) Billboards are prohibited in the city, except under the following conditions:
 - (1) No large billboard will be permitted which advertises a business which is not located and presently being conducted on the premises on which the billboard is located, except as follows:
 - (a) As may be permitted by applicable state and federal law, rules, and regulations along state and federal highways, or roads under the jurisdiction of the state or federal departments of transportation, and where the maximum permissible speed for vehicles traveling upon such highway or road is not less than fifty-five (55) miles per hour;
 - (b) The maximum height above grade of such large billboard shall not exceed thirty (30) feet;
 - (c) The maximum surface area of such large billboard shall not exceed six hundred seventy two (672) square feet;
 - (d) The lot, block, or parcel of real estate upon which said large billboard is located must have an area of no less than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet, and must be zoned for commercial or industrial use;
 - (e) The location of said large billboard shall be no less than twenty (20) feet from the property line of the lot upon which the large billboard is located;
 - (f) Said large billboard may not be located or placed within five hundred (500) feet from the nearest lot line of any residential zoned lot, block or parcel, or any lot, block or parcel use for residential purposes;
 - (g) Said large billboard may not be located any closer than one thousand five hundred (1,500) feet from another such large billboard whether on the same side of the highway or road; and
 - (h) Said large billboard may not be located in such a place or in such a manner so as to block the view of drivers of vehicles approaching an intersection.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS **APPLICATION FOR VARIANCE**

To have a complete application for a variance, you must submit the following:
 Signed and completed application Plat showing subject property and proposed site improvements Ownership documentation (lease, deed, mortgage, etc.) Application fee of \$100 payable to the City of Washington
Name(s) of Applicant(s): Robinson Outdoor, LLC (direct Contact: Danny Marler)
Name(s) of Applicant(s): Robinson Outdoor, LLC (direct Contact: Danny Marler) Applicant Phone Number: 314-304-8725 Property ID Number (PIN): 02 02 22 204 047
Applicant Address: 50 Robinson Industrial Drive, Perryville, MO 63775
Property Owner: Eagle Ridge Development Company LLC
Owner Address: 133A S. Main Street, Morton, IL 61550
d.marler@robinsonoutdoorlic.com
Current zoning classification of the property: C-2 (General Retail) Current use of the property: Vacant Lot
Describe the nature of the variation you are requesting (attach dimensioned site plan):
As depicted in the Attached Site Plan, a variance is requested to allow for the construction, installation,
and operation of an Electronic Digital Billboard with dimensions of 10 feet X 20 feet.
Describe how your property cannot yield a reasonable return, if it is required to be used only under the general conditions of your zoning classification:
The Subject Property has been vacant for many years. Allowing the installation of a Digital
Billboard would provide current income, and allow for the property to be developed in a First Class manner.
To the best of your knowledge, can you affirm that the hardship described above was not created by an action of anyone having property interests in the land after the Zoning Ordinance became law? Yesx No
If "no," explain why the hardship should not be regarded as self-imposed. (Self-imposed hardships are NOT entitled to variations.)
Not Applicable.
Describe how your situation is unique or different from any other property:
The Subject Property has been determined to be the most optional location in the vicinity
for a Digital Billboard.
Describe the alteration or change, if any, in the basic character of the neighborhood the variation, if granted, would make: No adverse change to the character of the neighborhood would occur by the allowance of
a variance for the installation of a Digital Billboard. The Digital Billboard, which will be of high
quality, will provide useful information to the community.

PUBLIC HEARING: Your case will be referred with staff's recommendation to the next regularly scheduled Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) meeting for a public hearing. The PZC meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the Washington District Library meeting room at 380 N. Wilmor Road. At the PZC meeting, you will present your request. A variance cannot be granted by the PZC unless the PZC finds, based upon the application and evidence presented at the public hearing, that a strict application of the terms of the Zoning Ordinance imposes practical difficulties or particular hardship. The following are examples of variances that can be granted:

- 1. To permit the extension of a district where the boundary line of a district divides a lot in single ownership as shown of record.
- To permit the reconstruction of a nonconforming building which has been destroyed or damaged to an extent of more than
 fifty percent (50%) of its value, by fire or act of God, or the public enemy, where the PZC shall find some compelling public
 necessity requiring a continuance of the nonconforming use, but in no case shall such a permit be issued if its primary
 function is to continue a monopoly.
- 3. To make a variance, by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property of record, or by reason of exceptional topographical conditions the strict application of any provision of this chapter would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties or particular hardship upon the owner of such property, and amount to a practical confiscation of property, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience to such owner, provided such relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the general purpose and intent of the comprehensive plan as established by the regulations and provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.
- To interpret the provisions of this chapter where the street layout actually on the ground varies from the street layout as shown on the district map fixing the several districts.
- 5. To waive the parking requirements in the business or industrial districts whenever the character or use of the building is such as to make unnecessary the full provision of parking facilities or where such regulations would impose an unreasonable hardship upon the use of the lot, as contrasted with merely granting an advantage or convenience.
- 6. To permit a building to be erected, reconstructed, altered, or enlarged so that the building lines would extend beyond the distance specific in this chapter into side yards or into front yards; provided that such variance may not be granted:
 - Unless there is a building in the block that extends beyond the distance from the front street line specified in this
 chapter, in which case the building line may be permitted to extend as near to the front street line as such
 nonconforming building;
 - b. Unless the lot is irregular in shape, topography, or size; or
 - Unless the street line of the lot is directly opposite the street line of a lot which is irregular in shape, topography, or size.
- 7. To permit in any district such modifications of the requirements of the regulations of this chapter as the Board may deem necessary to secure all appropriate development of a lot where adjacent to such lot on two or more sides there are buildings that do not conform to the regulations of the district.

Certification: To the best of my knowledge, the information contained herein, and on the attachments, is true, accurate, and correct, and substantially represents the existing features and proposed features. Any error, misstatement, or misrepresentation of material fact or expression of material fact, with or without intention, shall constitute sufficient grounds for the revocation or denial of the proposed Variance.

Signature of Applicant Date

Description College Managing Member 8/14/2024

Signature of Owner (if different)

Date

After receiving a completed application, the City Clerk will file notice of your request with the local newspaper and with the adjoining property owners. If you have any questions, please contact Joe Boyer, Building & Zoning Coordinator, at (309) 444-1122.

Tazewell County, Illinois

generated on 9/4/2024 3:01:19 PM CDT

Parcel

Parcel ID 02-02-22-204-049

Alt. PIN

Parcel Address 1230 PEORIA ST, WASHINGTON Data as of 11/18/2023

Tax Payer Information

Tax Payer

EAGLE RIDGE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LLC

Tax Payer Address

133A S MAIN ST MORTON IL 61550

Transfer Date

02/03/2023

Location Information

GIS

Section & Plat

District No.

02021 002, State Assigned District No. 020

Routing No.

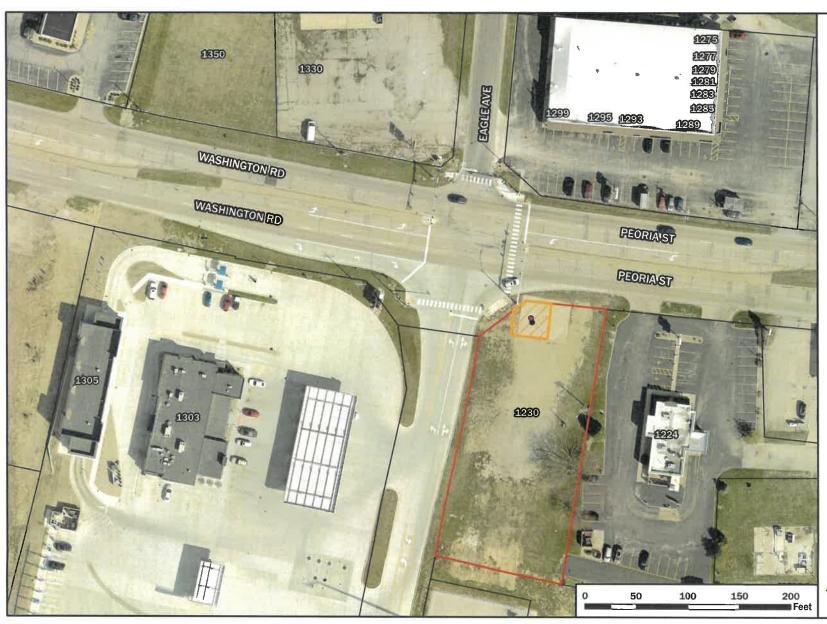
Township No.
Parcel Address

1230 PEORIA ST, WASHINGTON

Legal Desc.

SEC 22 T26N R3W BECK MERCANTILE PLACE FINAL PLAT LOT 2 NE 1/4.72 AC

Parcel Information		Topography		Services	
		Level	Ν	Water	
Property Class Code	60 COMMERCIAL BUSINESS	High	Ν	Sewer	
Neighborhood Code	229	Low	Ν		
Neighborhood Factor	.00	Rolling	Ν	Gas	
Neighborhood Type		Swampy	N	Electricity	N
Street or Road Code		Flood Hazard		Sidewalk	
		Waterfront Property Type		Alley	Ν



1230 Peoria St

PIN: 02-02-22-204-049

Legend

- Proposed Location
- Required Setback
 Point
- Proposed
 Signage
 Easement
- 1230 Peoria St
- ☐ Parcels





Date: 9/24/2024

This map indicates approximate data locations and may not be 100% accurate. Parcels are provided and maintained by Tazewell County.



AUSTIN ENGINEERING CO., INC. Consulting Engineers / Surveyors 131 WWWeter St., Suite 215 Pearing, Illinois 61602 License No. 184-001143



EASEMENT EXHIBIT PLAT

OF THE NORTHEAST OWNER OF SECTION 12. TOWNSHIP 28

RANGE 3 WEST OF THE SIMPLA. TAZENELL COUNTY ILLINGIS

FOR. ROBINSON OUTDOOR

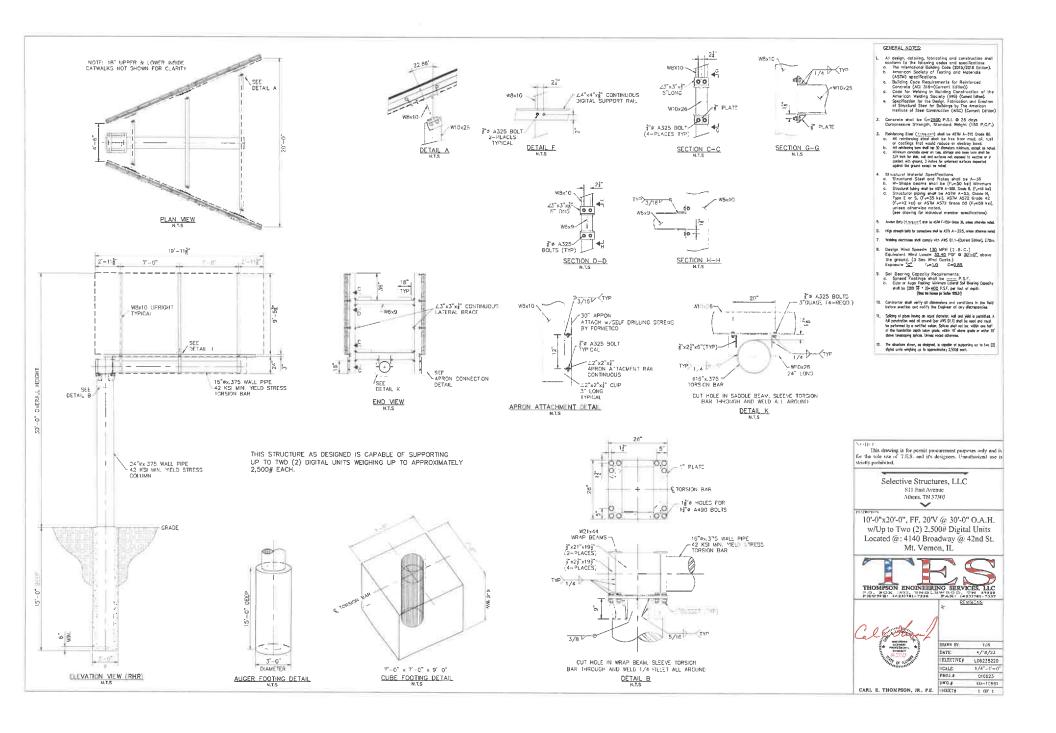
EXHIBIT PLAT

JOKADIA-KOX

DOKADIA-KOX

DOKAD

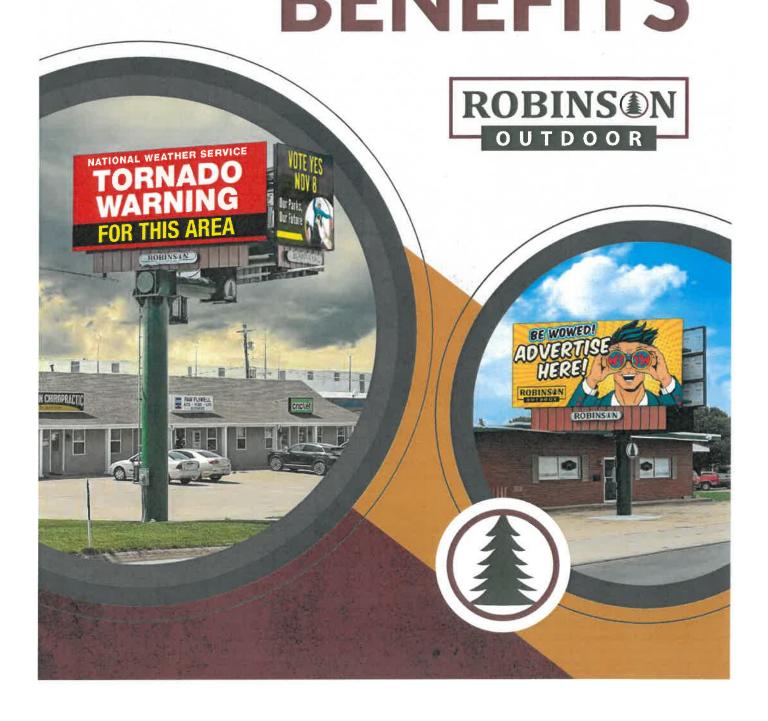
1 OF 1





WASHINGTON

Digital Billboards provide COMMUNITY BENEFITS



INTRODUCTION

Digital billboards are the fastest growing form of media in the US for many reasons. They are attractive, sleek and very flexible. They offer a very valuable advertising outlet for local and regional businesses, helping businesses grow and attract customers. They are also extremely beneficial for municipalities, tourism and community communications. They are attractive for municipalities as one digital billboard location is the equivalent of 8-10 traditional billboards, occupying much more real estate within a city.

Our digital billboard network will offer advertisers a great opportunity to promote their business throughout the city, as well as many surrounding towns attracting more customers to this area. They are capable of providing community service communications by way of Weather Alerts, Missing Children & Elderly Alerts, Wanted Fugitives, Stock Market Info, Breaking News, Local, Regional and National Sports info and more.

We would also like to extend the following offer and opportunity to the city. The city can utilize our digital biliboard for the promotion of local events such as Community Festivals, Holiday Promotions, Tourism Related Events, Safety messages such as Halloween Trick-or-Treating Safety Tips, Fire Department Car Seat Checks, and more. We will offer this as a free service to the community, based on availability.

Digital billboards DO NOT allow moving or flashing content like on-premise signs, but rather just a static message before immediately changing to the next image. In Missouri and Iowa the static image changes every 8 seconds, in Illinois the static image changes every 10 seconds. There have been major public safety surveys conducted by Virginia Tech, The Tantala Institute and the DOT, all of which have concurred that digital billboards pose no risk to motorists. In fact, 80% of adults believe that digital billboards, more so than traditional billboards, actually aid motorists with relevant and real-time information, while businesses continue to increase their advertising investment across the digital billboard industry.

Thank you for your consideration of this Sign Permit. We believe that if we were to successfully gain approval, that many local businesses will see a positive financial impact from this development and your city will deliver a positive community impact through marketing and outreach.

Thank you, Robinson Outdoor

HEARTFELT COMMUNITY MESSAGE

November 2, 2022

In the spring of 2021, the City of Mayfield, Kentucky, was contacted by Robinson Outdoor Digital Billiboard Company about the possibility of the placement of a digital billiboard within our community.

The ordinance was passed, and by late summer of 2021, Robinson Outdoor had installed two digital billboards on the main thoroughfare in Mayfield. Life in our beautily small town continued its usual patterns until December 10.

On that evening an EF4 tornado roared through Mayfield, taking the lives of 24 clitzens, taking EVERY city and county government building, taking the HOMES of nearly 1500 of our people, wiping out much of the INFRASTRUCTURE of our WATER and ELECTRIC systems, taking our entire HISTORIC DOWNTOWN commercial district, and changing our lives forever. Almost as soon as those horrid winds quit blowing, though, we began to see outstretched hands offering all types of help from across our Commonwealth and then from across the country.

On the second day after the disaster, Robinson Outdoor rolled in with much needed pallets of water. But what would follow from them truly was one of the most needed efforts we received. At no cost to our city, on those beautiful digital billboards began to appear the information that was so vital to our people for their immediate survival - where to go for FOOD, where to go for SHELTER, where to go for information for FEMA filing and other organizations offering help. For the next few months any information required by the public was in full view, 24 hours a day. This will always be what our community remembers about this company, for they truly were a lifeline to so many with this service.

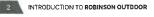
We will forever be grateful to Robinson Outdoor for their help when we needed it the most, and now, for their continued partnership and support to the City of Mayfield.

Sincerely, Mayor Kathy S. O'Nan, City of Mayfield, Kentucky

OVER 7,000 TIMES

HEARTFELT MESSAGE







CITY BENEFITS

WEATHER WARNINGS: Our weather alerts are triggered by the National Weather Service to inform the community of any impending tornadoes, thunderstorms, hail or freezing weather warnings.

BOIL WATER ORDERS: When a community boil water notice is put in place, as soon as we are informed, we can put an ad on the billboard in that community to alert residents to avoid drinking water until otherwise notified.

MISSING PERSONS: Once we are alerted by local authorities, missing persons ads are posted on our billboards to assist the police on returning the person back home safely.

WANTED FUGITIVES: If we are alerted by local authorities we will advertise "wanted" fugitive ads on our billboards to assist the police on locating the person and getting them into custody.

SAFETY MESSAGES: These messages can help keep community members safe by informing them of safety tips and tricks for upcoming holidays and events and general things to remember.

















COMMUNITY **BENEFITS**

TOURISM EVENTS:

Promote community events like festivals, blood drives, conferences, workshops and so much more.

SCHOOL RELATED MESSAGES: Show support to local athletes and students by using digital billboards to encourage community school spirit.

CHARITY EVENTS:

When communities host charity events, the billboard ads can encourage residents to attend and participate.

LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT: Digital billboards can show support of local law enforcement and assist in community unification.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS CITY BENEFITS

SAFETY SUPPORTING ARTICLES



FEDERAL HIGHWAY STUDY CONFIRMS DIGITAL BILLBOARD SAFETY:

The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration has released a landmark study declaring that digital billiboards do not pose a safety risk to passing motorists. The results of this study come as no surprise. Numerous traffic studies and analyses performed in the last couple of decades have reached similar conclusions.

administration-confirms-emc-digital-sign-safety

STATISTICS ON FATAL ACCIDENTS INDICATE NO CORRELATION BETWEEN DIGITAL BILLBOARDS AND TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS:

Numerous studies have been performed on whether digital billboards cause fatal accidents. The resounding finding has been that they cannot establish a cause-and-effect between digital billboards and these tragedles.





DIGITAL TRAFFIC SAFETY:

Research shows that billboards, even the most attention-getting billboards, are not related to accidents. The presence of billboards does not affect the motorists' behavior, such as changing lanes or the speed of the vehicle.



DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

HERE ARE CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

"We've seen a large increase in the number of customers since advertising with Robinson Outdoor. We have people every day tell us they saw our signs and didn't even know we were here, even though we have been here for 3 years."

JAY'S RV

"Great leadership in this company and top-quality design services. All-inclusive support from the entire staff. Beautiful results!"

SUBZERO WELLNESS

"Sometimes it can be difficult to visualize mental health, and Robinson Outdoor has helped us create awareness in a very professional manner. They have even allowed us to use their graphics on our social media pages as a part of a cohesive marketing plan. I highly recommend Robinson Outdoor."

BOOTHEEL COUNSELING SERVICES

"Working with the design team was so easy. They create engaging designs. Then after I say, 'Yes let's go with it,' BAM! It is up and running on the board."

HEMMAN WINERY

"They make you feel important and validated, like your business is appreciated and valued. We have had nothing but the best communication with everyone at Robinson Outdoor. Would highly recommend using this company."

GASTORF CHEVROLET

"A customer saw our billboard, bypassed his original destination and drove to my business to make a purchase with me."

USA MATTRESS

10

SAFETY SUPPORTING ARTICLES

LIGHTING & CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS



Our goal is to bring innovative & impactful advertising to your community.

