



5909 North Milwaukee River Parkway
Glendale, WI 53209

SUBJECT: *Ordinance 2026-03-02 — Amending* Subsection (n) of Chapter 15.6.10
Pertaining to Billboards and Other Advertising Media

FROM: Karl Warwick, City Administrator

MEETING: March 23, 2026 Common Council Agenda

MEETING DATE: March 23, 2026

FISCAL SUMMARY:

STATUTORY REFERENCE:

Municipal Code: 15.6.10 Billboards and Other Advertising

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS: The City's current regulations on billboards permit them in certain areas adjacent to I-43 and adjacent to and south of Glendale Avenue. The total number of billboards in the city cannot exceed five structures or ten display boards.

The enclosed ordinance would permit billboards south of Lexington Avenue and six structures, and maintain the maximum number of billboard displays at ten. Billboards must still meet the vocational requirements, such as proximity to the interstate, distance from other billboards, and setback from the property line.

Several items within the ordinance were also updated, including design standards, the location of structures in the right-of-way, and in proximity to buildings.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider approval of the ordinance amending regulations for billboards and other advertising media

ACTION REQUESTED: Motion to adopt ordinance 2026-03-02, amending Subsection (n) of

Chapter 15.6.10 pertaining to billboards and other advertising media.

ATTACHMENTS:

Ordinance Billboard Amendments

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-03-02

An Ordinance, Repealing and Replacing subsection (n) Digital billboards of Chapter 15.6.10 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Glendale
pertaining to REGULATION OF SIGNS, BILLBOARDS, AND OTHER ADVERTISING
MEDIA

The Mayor and the Common Council of the City of Glendale, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, do herewith ordain as follows, to-wit:

SECTION I

The following Sections of the Glendale Code of Ordinances are hereby repealed in their entirety and replaced with the following:

15.6.10 Permitted signs by definition and requirements.

(n) *Digital billboards.*

1) *Permit required.*

- a. No digital billboard may be erected or placed without a sign permit. Face changes to the digital billboard shall require a new permit.
- b. Structures where digital billboards are originally mounted shall require all appropriate permits, such as, but not limited to, a building permit and an electrical permit.
- c. One application form is required per digital billboard. A digital billboard with two faces on a single structure is considered one sign.
- d. Application for the permit shall include:
 1. Scale drawing(s).
 2. A scale plot plan showing sign location and relevant sign features, property lines, and other site features as needed for evaluation.
 3. A drawing showing all property lines and building footprints within 1,000 feet, or such other distance as required by the Plan Commission.
 4. A drawing showing the view corridor of the proposed digital billboard.

5. A drawing showing the sign's height relative to surrounding structures and the tree line in the area.
6. Elevations of the proposed structure and digital display board to scale.
7. An illustration of the proposal to scale as well as an illustration of the proposal within context.
8. Architectural details and drawings depicting design elements as required.
9. Landscaping plan for the surrounding area at the base of the sign.
10. Drawings showing access locations for maintenance, including vehicle turning radius, except that the State right-of-way shall not be used for access.
11. Engineering drawings with the engineer's stamp regarding the structure design of the sign.
12. Any other information requested to allow proper evaluation of the proposal.

2) *License.*

- a. A bill posting license is required for persons, companies, agencies, or other ownership. A bill posting license is also required for any person, company, agency, or organization that rents, leases, or maintains such a sign. For bill posting license, refer to chapter 7 of the Municipal Code.
- b. Permit applications shall be accompanied by a non-refundable fee as shown in the fee schedule published by the city and amended from time to time.
- c. Permits may be granted subject to conditions as deemed necessary at the discretion of the reviewer to adhere to the policy and purpose of this chapter.
- d. *Development agreement required.* A development agreement is required for signs in a planned development district or as otherwise required by the Planning and Architectural Review Commission.

3) *Municipally-owned land.* When a digital billboard is to be erected on a municipally owned property, a development agreement and a lease agreement shall be approved by the Common Council. Such a development agreement and lease agreement shall be recorded with the register of deeds prior to issuance of any permits.

4) *Bases for application denial.* Permit applications shall be granted unless, in the sole discretion of the Zoning Administrator or designee:

- a. The permit application is not complete, does not otherwise comply with the requirements of this chapter, or is not accompanied by the required fee.
- b. The permit application indicates that the proposed digital billboard sign would not comply with this chapter.

- c. The digital billboard sign would be aesthetically incompatible with the character of buildings, other structures, or the surroundings on or adjacent to its site.
- d. The digital billboard sign would be incompatible or impede the existing or future use of the buildings, other structures, or the surroundings on or adjacent to its site.
- e. The digital billboard sign would obstruct any views of scenic or historic importance.
- f. The digital billboard sign would create an unreasonable restriction of light, air, or view from nearby windows.
- g. The digital billboard sign would interfere with neighboring permitted uses such as solar panels, antennas, etc.
- h. The digital billboard would otherwise adversely impact the health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the public.

5) *Digital billboard sign regulations.*

- a. *Area limitations.* Digital billboards, where permitted, shall be subject to the following:
 - 1. Bulletin style/horizontal digital billboards shall not be more than 14 feet high and 48 feet wide, nor exceed 672 square feet in area.
 - 2. Poster digital billboards shall not be more than ten feet high and 22 feet wide, nor exceed 220 square feet.
- b. *Location.* Digital billboards, where permitted, shall be subject to the following:
 - 1. The site shall be freestanding only and shall not be erected on or attached to, suspended from, or supported by a building.
 - 2. No portion of any off-premise freestanding sign or digital billboard may extend into the public right-of-way or project over any public or private access drive, public or private building, or outdoor gathering space for people, such as a patio or plaza.
 - 3. Digital billboards may be located on industrial zoned properties, (M-1), or in areas zoned for planned unit developments, or on such other properties as may be allowed in the discretion of the Planning and Architectural Review Commission.
 - 4. Digital Billboard signs may only be located on properties in proximity to I-43 such that, once erected, such signs are primarily visible to traffic traveling on the interstate.
 - 5. Digital Billboard signs may only be located on properties south of W. Lexington Blvd. and north of the southern municipal boundary.

6. Only one digital Billboard structure may be located on a property, and shall not be built over or on any utility easement.
 7. No digital billboard shall be erected or maintained at any location where, by reason of its position, wording, illumination, size, shape, or color, it may obstruct, impair, obscure, interfere with the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic control sign, signal, or device. Digital billboards and structures may not be located within vision triangles nor otherwise impede traffic or pedestrian visibility.
 8. No digital billboard shall be located within 200 feet of any residential district from which the sign face is visible. The distance shall be calculated as the shortest measurable distance between the nearest point of the sign to the edge of the residential zoning district, in a straight line and without regard to intervening structures.
- c. *Number per structure.* A maximum of two digital billboards may be located on any one billboard structure.
 - d. *Setback from the property line.* Digital billboard signs shall be setback a minimum of 25 feet from all property boundaries, or a distance approved by the State of Wisconsin.
 - e. *Setback from building.* Digital billboard signs shall be setback a minimum of 25 feet from all buildings, structures, or outdoor gathering spaces such as a patio or plaza, or a distance approved by the State of Wisconsin.
 - f. *Setback from I-43.* Digital billboard signs shall be setback a minimum of 75 feet from I-43, or a distance approved by the State of Wisconsin.
 - g. *Limitation on number of digital billboards in City.* At no time shall the number of digital billboards located in the city of Glendale exceed six support structures, with a maximum of 10 display boards, except that the City of Glendale may, in its discretion, maintain a civic, non-digital billboard face at 4269 North Port Washington Rd., which billboard face shall not count towards the limitation of the 10 digital boards.
 - h. *Prohibited zoning areas.* Digital billboard signs shall be a prohibited use in any residential zoning district.
 - i. *Spacing between digital billboards.* No digital billboard shall be permitted within 500 feet of another billboard on the same side of Interstate 43 (I-43), or as approved by the State of Wisconsin.
 - j. *Height of digital billboards.* The maximum height of billboards shall be 60 feet. In no event shall the maximum height of any billboard exceed the height requirements for buildings in the underlying zoning district regulations. The minimum height shall be 12 feet above grade. Architectural elements may exceed the maximum height of by no more than five feet.

- k. *Electrical permits required.* Where the digital billboard is illuminated, a separate electrical permit shall be obtained as required by the electrical code.
- l. *Building permits required.* The structure in which a digital billboard is intended to be attached shall obtain all applicable permits, which may include, but are not limited to, building, grading, and erosion control permits, for example.
- m. *Agreement for reimbursable services.* An agreement for reimbursable services shall be submitted with all digital billboard applications.
- n. *Electronic displays.*
 - 1. Electronically-illuminated digital billboards shall not utilize visual effects such as flashing, moving images or letters, or alternating images.
 - 2. Messages or images may change no faster than every eight seconds and the change must be made in one-half second or less.
 - 3. The electronic display portion of the billboard sign may not exceed 500 nits in design luminance at night or 3,000 nits in design luminance during daylight hours.
 - 4. Illumination shall be confined to the facing of the sign or billboard and shall not cause glare onto abutting properties.
 - 5. Digital billboards shall bear an Underwriter's Laboratories Inc. label of approval or that of any other certified agency.
- o. *Prohibitions.*
 - 1. Audio speakers and all forms of pyrotechnics.
- p. *Vegetation.*
 - 2. Existing vegetation or vegetation that was identified on an approved site plan or planned development shall not be removed to accommodate a digital billboard or to provide better visibility of a digital billboard unless a revised site plan and landscaping plan is submitted, reviewed, and approved by the plan commission. Coniferous trees shall not require replacement unless they are part of a landscaping plan specifically intended to screen areas of one property to another. Replacement of deciduous trees shall be located on the property. Deciduous trees removed that are:
 - i. Each three to seven-inch-diameter at breast height (dbh) tree shall be replaced with one five to seven-inch DBH tree or two three-inch DBH trees;
 - ii. Each eight to 11-inch-DBH tree shall be replaced with two five to seven-inch-DBH trees or three three-inch-DBH trees;
 - iii. Any 12-inch DBH tree or larger shall be replaced with three five to seven-inch DBH trees or six three-inch DBH trees.

3. Vegetation within the public right-of-way. Vegetation within the city, county, state, or federal rights-of-way shall not be removed. Vegetation within state rights-of-way shall follow Wisconsin Code and Statutes.
4. Digital billboard shall have landscaping at the base of the sign consisting of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs, as well as perennials.
5. Landscaping on the site will also be required to screen the view of the digital billboard structure and equipment from local public rights-of-way, public sidewalks, parking areas, and view corridors from pedestrian areas and residential streets.

q. *Design guidelines.*

1. Electronic billboard structures shall be designed to have a unified structural design with architectural appeal.
2. Electronic billboard structures shall consider architectural elements that provide a strong base, middle, and top.
3. Electronic billboard structures shall be more than just an engineering solution but shall be designed to enhance the environmental design of the community.
4. No single architectural style is dictated by these standards. Design style shall be unique, timeless, and use high-quality materials that create a finished and refined design.
5. A shroud or other architectural element shall be used around the main structural support element as well as any horizontal or cantilevered elements, unless an alternate landscaping plan is requested.

r. *Installation.*

1. At the time of installation, the installer must demonstrate that the digital billboard structure and design have been certified by an independent structural engineer and must maintain a certificate of compliance with all structural and safety requirements.

s. *Maintenance.*

1. A structural/maintenance report shall be submitted to the City of Glendale after the first 10 years of construction and every 5 years thereafter. Such reports shall indicate any necessary structural repairs and provide a timeline for their completion. Such reports shall be prepared by a licensed structural engineer. If a report is not furnished by January 1st of the tenth year or any following five-year period of the sign, then the sign permit shall be considered in default, and an automatic \$500 per month penalty will be assessed until the required report is submitted.

If any subsection, section or portions of this article or the sections of this ordinance as enacted hereunder is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portions shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision and such holdings shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.

SECTION III

All ordinances or parts of ordinances contravening the terms and provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed to that extent.

SECTION IV

This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication as provided by law, and the City Clerk shall so amend the Code of Ordinances of the City of Glendale. The Clerk shall indicate the date and number of this amending ordinance therein.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Glendale, this _____ day of _____, A.D. 2026.

Bryan Kennedy, Mayor

Countersigned:

Marcy Granger, City Clerk