



SAVANNAH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

STAFF REPORT

PETITIONER: Pittman Real Estate Holdings of GA – Winston Pittman, Sr.
MPC FILE No: 26-00080-ZBA
ADDRESS: 7 Park of Commerce Way
PIN: 20831 02027
DATE: May 18, 2026
MPC Staff: DeAndrae Spradley

Nature of Request (New Billboard installation with Variance):

The Petitioner is requesting for approval of a variance at 7 Park of Commerce Way, Savannah, Georgia 31401 (parcel identification number 20831 02027 from the following City of Savannah's Zoning Regulations:

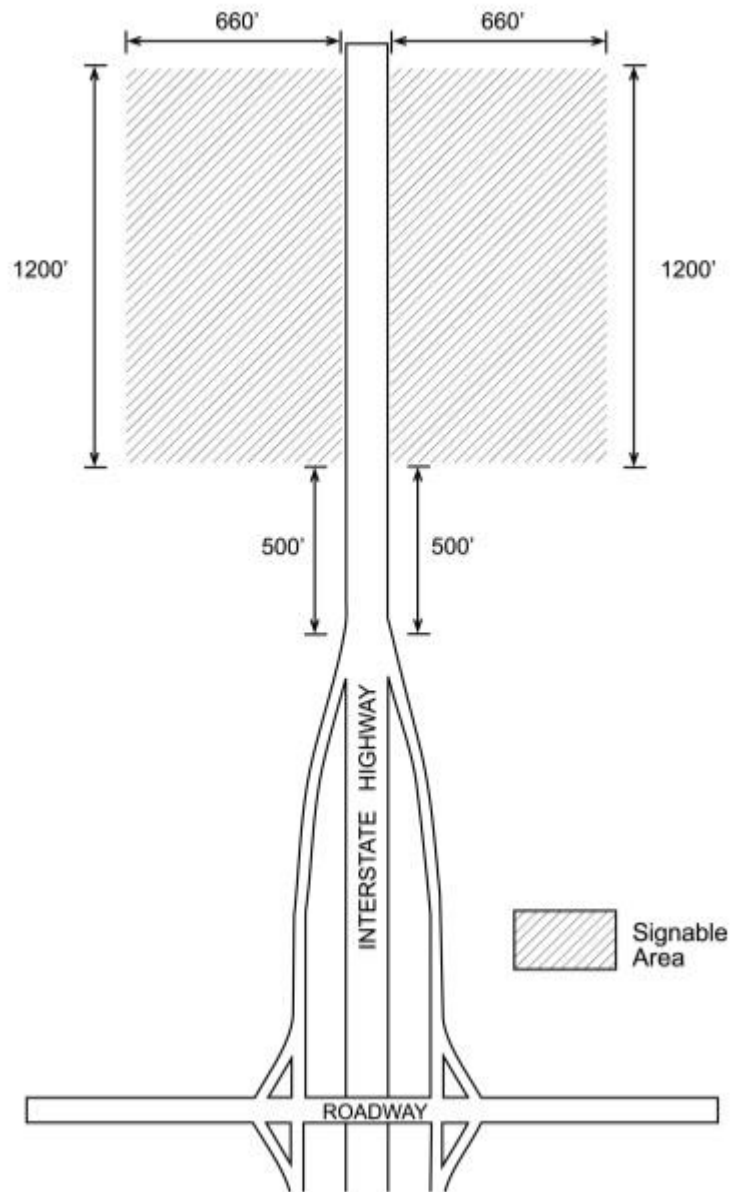
- Section 9.9.15.d.

9.9.15 Billboards

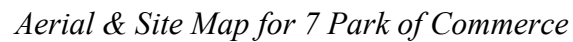
d. Interstate Highway

- Billboards adjacent to an Interstate Highway shall be limited to three (3) signs per roadway frontage per interchange quadrant with the signs being restricted to an area 1,200 feet in length, beginning 500 feet from the point where the pavement commences or ceases to widen at exits from or entrances to the main-traveled way, as measured to accommodate the longest entrance or exit ramp.
- All signs shall be in compliance with GDOT standards and Georgia law. Further, all signs within the same quadrant shall be a minimum of 500 feet apart at their nearest points and shall be located within 660 feet of an Interstate Highway right-of-way.

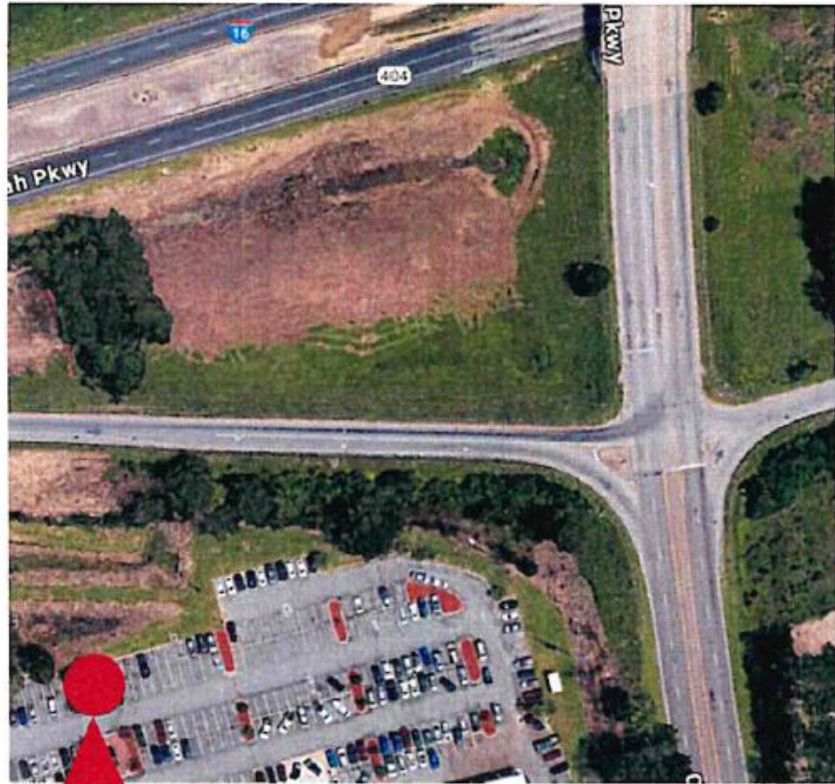
Figure 9.9-16 Signable Quadrant for Billboards along Interstate Highways



The Petitioner is requesting variance on the subject property to locate a new digital billboard outside of the allowable area as determined by the Signable Quadrant for Billboards along Interstate Highways of the Signage Ordinance regulations and design standards. Per the Petitioner's submitted signage drawings, the billboard would be forty-eight feet (48 ft.) wide and fourteen feet (14 ft.) tall with a maximum overall height of forty-five feet (45 ft.) above the existing grade.



1. An aerial view that shows the proposed location of the new digital billboard is featured below:



Billboard Location

2. Per Figure 9.9-12, the subject property is located at the intersection of two 'Restricted Highways' (Interstate 16 and Chatham Parkway). Per Section 9.9.15.f. of the City's Zoning Regulations, a billboard in the proposed location is not permissible under the current development standards.

Section 9.9.15.f. Signs along Restricted Roadways (other than Interstate Highways)

- i. *Billboards shall not be permitted within 660 feet of the right-of-way of a restricted roadway except as provided for in subsection g. below.*
- ii. *A billboard may be permitted where such sign is oriented toward the travel way of an adjacent arterial street and the sign, including the sign support, is blocked from view from the travel way of the restricted roadway by a permanent structure.*

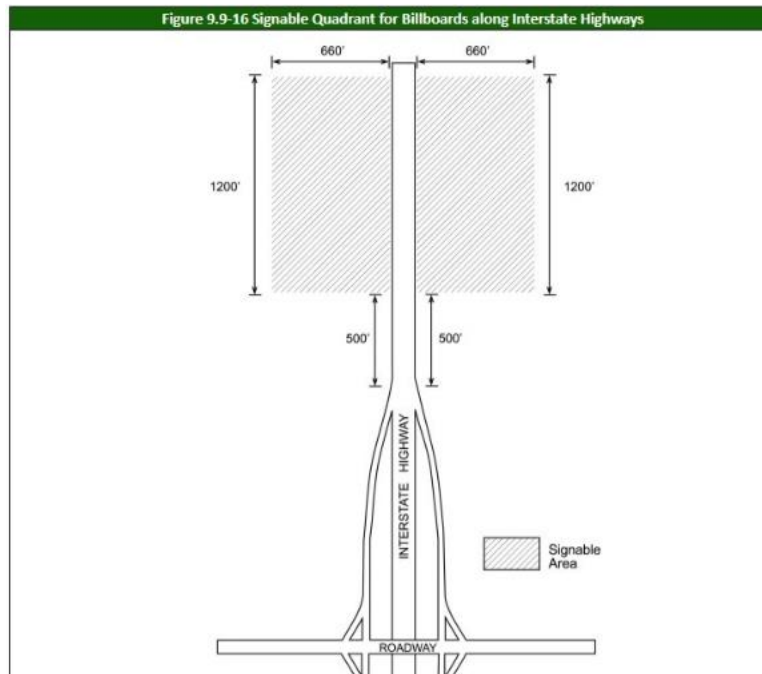
Section 9.9.15.g. Signs within a Signable Quadrant

Billboards shall be permitted within a signable quadrant subject to the following conditions:

- i. *The property is zoned to allow a billboard.*
 - ii. *The billboard complies with all design standards and separation requirements.*
 - iii. *No more than three (3) billboards shall be permitted within each signable quadrant of the intersection*
 - iv. *The signs do not violate the interstate and protected roadway provisions of these regulations*
3. Per Section 9.9.15.d.i. of the City's Zoning Regulations, there is a specific "signable area" where billboards along an interstate highway shall be located:

Section 9.9.15.d. Interstate Highway

- i. *Billboards adjacent to an Interstate Highway shall be limited to three (3) signs per roadway frontage per interchange quadrant with the signs being restricted to an area 1,200 feet in length, beginning 500 feet from the point where the pavement commences or ceases to widen at exits from or entrances to the main-traveled way, as measured to accommodate the longest entrance or exit ramp.*



Based on the Petitioner's proposed billboard location, the proposed billboard would be far outside the "signable area" and much closer to the intersection of I-16 and Chatham Parkway. This billboard position is influenced by the geometry of the off ramp, the utility easement for electrical transmission lines, and the existing drainage features on the subject property. Also, the entirety of the subject property exists beside the exit ramp and cannot host a billboard that must be located at least 500' from the start of that exit ramp.

4. Sightlines and Limited Visibility: This location for a digital billboard presents a visual distraction to drivers as they exit the interstate as well as drivers on Chatham Parkway as they approach the interchange with I-16. The image below illustrates the limited visibility from both eastbound I-16 and the Exit 162 off ramp. Drivers would have to look up and far-right, diverting their attention from the road ahead.



Google Streetview imagery from December 2025 shows visibility from exit ramp



Google Streetview imagery from November 2025 shows visibility from westbound I-16

Visibility of the requested billboard would be severely limited from westbound I-16 traffic due to the street incline and embankment for the Chatham Parkway overpass. These factors are likely why the ordinance has the “signable areas” 500-ft fore or aft of the exit and entry ramps, to avoid these sightline and visibility issues.

Visibility from Chatham Parkway would also be limited due to the proposed billboard being far from the intersection and angled to favor traffic on I-16. Hence the sign surfaces would be almost parallel to traffic along Chatham Parkway. These sightlines would require drivers to divert their attention

away from the road to read a distant billboard at awkward viewing angles.

5. Per Article 3 *Section 3.21.9(a)*, the Zoning Board of Appeals may authorize a variance in an individual case upon finding that:

A. **General Consistency**

The variance shall be consistent with the intent of this Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan, and shall not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare.

MPC Comment: The variance is **inconsistent** with the Sign Ordinance and current design standards. The requested location is far outside the “signable area” at the intersection of two restricted roadways. If granted, the request would present a visual distraction along the I-16 exit ramp and Chatham Parkway that could be detrimental to public safety and welfare.

B. **Special Conditions**

- i. *Special conditions and/or circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, buildings or structures involved and which are not applicable to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.*

MPC Comment: The property itself has special conditions based upon geographic location, rights-of-way, easements and drainage features. However, these factors should not constitute hardship or relief from the Sign Ordinance since the standards are primarily based upon specific locations and allowable areas.

- ii. *The special conditions and/or circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.*

MPC Comment: The special conditions and circumstances are not a result of the actions of the applicant.

- iii. *The special conditions and/or circumstances are not purely financial in nature so as to allow the applicant to use the land, buildings or structures involved more profitably or to save money.*

MPC Comment: Signage, especially a billboard along an interstate highway, is intended for marketing and advertising. The primary goal of this billboard would be to increase profits and revenues. The

typical operations and utility of the property would not be adversely affected without the requested billboard.

C. Literal Interpretation

Literal interpretation of the provisions of the regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the Ordinance and would result in unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.

MPC Comment: The literal interpretation of the regulations would not deny the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other property owners. Properties in a similar location would be subject to the same ordinances that result in the analysis and conditions herein.

D. Minimum Variance

The variance, if granted, is the minimum variance necessary to make possible the reasonable use of land, buildings or structures.

MPC Comment: The requested variance would allow the billboard despite the language and restrictions set forth in the ordinance but *would not* address the sightline and visibility issues mentioned above. A lesser variance is not readily apparent.

E. Special Privilege Not Granted

The variance would not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.

MPC Comment: The variance would convey a special privilege to the Petitioner. They would be granted a billboard in a location where the ordinance explicitly does not allow it to be. This is the purest definition of a special privilege.

Recommendation:

MPC staff recommends **DENIAL** of the requested variance for this billboard as it is inconsistent with multiple sections of the City's Signage Ordinance and has limited visibility with restricted sightlines that could pose health, safety and welfare risks for motorists on both I-16 and Chatham Parkway.