

My name is John Jacobs and I live on the near west side in Alder Bidar-Sielaff's district.

I didn't know about this legislation until the mayor's veto was reported. When I started to look into the issue, the points the mayor raised made sense.

Except the part where the mayor said this legislation can be easily fixed. I don't think so. Unless you like billboards

Our existing ordinance tries - however slowly - to reduce billboards.

But this new legislation comes at it from an entirely different direction by providing a guaranteed entitlement of square footage to billboard companies forever.

Please uphold the mayor's veto. Cap and Replace is fundamentally flawed and can't be fixed.

At the last Council meeting, Alder Verveer cautioned you about abandoning our longstanding policy. He also said the billboard industry has pitched proposals like Cap and Replace numerous times but were always rejected roundly by earlier Councils.

Articles from 1989 when our existing ordinance was approved, show that Alder Verveer was right. Back in '89 Adams Outdoor Advertising "offered to limit the number of sign permits, but wanted to be able to switch locations of signs."

That sounds like Cap and Replace doesn't it? Keep the same number of permits but move the signs around. After 26 years of trying, Adams may finally have their wish come true.

With Alder Schmidt's legislation, signs may be moved around the city with only zoning code review.

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Two different billboard situations that you may be familiar with illustrate some of the problems.

On 1200 East Washington billboards are slated to come down by attrition and be gone forever. Unless Cap and Replace is approved and then they'll come back from the dead in another location - maybe on Fish Hatchery in Alder Strasser's district.

The other is the Foreign Car Specialists property at 1313 Regent Street where the new owner wants the city to help bail him out of a billboard lease he voluntarily assumed when he bought the property for \$ 2.3 million last August.

Unlike East Washington, where getting rid of the billboard lease was simply a cost of doing business, here on Regent, the owner wants a subsidy from the city.

Is it our problem if he paid too much for the property?

On East Washington, billboards are slated to disappear without Cap and Replace.

On Regent Street, the developer and billboard company will make out like bandits while the city shoulders the burden of **their** billboards forever.

No wonder the mayor said: "Where's our cut?"  
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Double-dipping:

On the other hand, with Cap and Replace, there's nothing to prevent a billboard company from double-dipping. I would expect a litigious billboard company to enforce its lease contract with the property owner to the maximum extent possible.

The billboard company can first squeeze as much money as possible from the property owner and then turn around and still get a guaranteed entitlement of square footage from the city.

In this case, development costs may not be reduced much, if at all, there could still be a financing problem for development.

Then what have you accomplished by replacing our existing policy with Cap and Replace?

Double-dipping is a fundamental problem of this legislation without an easy fix.  
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What about the numerous billboards that exist in the Town of Madison which, by contract, will be annexed to the city by 2020? Even more Billboards Forever.

The sunset clause is inadequate protection. Because the normal attrition rate is low, even a few years of Cap and Replace could set us back decades for reducing billboards.

Even with the UDC "compromise" Cap and Replace is bad policy because of the double-dip problem. The chances for redevelopment may not be improved with Cap and Replace.

The only thing that Cap and Replace guarantees is the entitlement that billboard companies are granted to keep the same square footage of billboards forever.  
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Please, do what your predecessors on the Council did. Look out for the long term appearance of our fair city. Uphold the mayors' veto. Reject Cap and Replace. You can't repair this fundamentally flawed legislation.

Thank you.