

## ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

August 17, 2022



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 5709 Odana Road  
**Project Name:** Madison Family Dental  
**Application Type:** Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage  
**Legistar File ID #** [72846](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector  
**Reviewed By:** Jessica Vaughn, Urban Design Commission Secretary

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review of signage for an existing dentist office looking to update their existing signs, which would be considered new signage. The property is located in a Commercial Corridor – Transitional (CC-T) District, as well as in UDD #3 and is adjacent to Odana Road (2 lanes, 30 mph) and the Beltline (5 lanes, 55 mph). The proposed signage complies with the sign ordinance, however the signs do not comply with the UDD requirements.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), MGO, the UDC shall apply the following criteria upon review of an application for a Comprehensive Sign Plan:

1. *The Sign Plan shall create visual harmony between the signs, building(s), and building site through unique and exceptional use of materials, design, color, any lighting, and other design elements; and shall result in signs of appropriate scale and character to the uses and building(s) on the zoning lot as well as adjacent buildings, structures and uses.*
2. *Each element of the Sign Plan shall be found to be necessary due to unique or unusual design aspects in the architecture or limitations in the building site or surrounding environment; except that when a request for an Additional Sign Code Approval under Sec. 31.043(3) is included in the Comprehensive Design Review, the sign(s) eligible for approval under Sec. 31.043(3) shall meet the applicable criteria of Sec. 31.043(3), except that sign approvals that come to Comprehensive Design Review from MXC and EC districts pursuant to 31.13(3) and (7) need not meet the criteria of this paragraph.*
3. *The Sign Plan shall not violate any of the stated purposes described in Sec. 31.02(1) and 33.24(2).*
4. *All signs must meet minimum construction requirements under Sec. 31.04(5).*
5. *The Sign Plan shall not approve Advertising beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.11 or Off-Premise Directional Signs beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.115.*
6. *The Sign Plan shall not be approved if any element of the plan:*
  - a. *presents a hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic on public or private property,*
  - b. *obstructs views at points of ingress and egress of adjoining properties,*
  - c. *obstructs or impedes the visibility of existing lawful signs on adjacent property, or*
  - d. *negatively impacts the visual quality of public or private open space.*
7. *The Sign Plan may only encompass signs on private property of the zoning lot or building site in question, and shall not approve any signs in the right of way or on public property.*

Section 33.24(10)(c)4., Signage Criteria for Urban Design District No. 3, indicates the Urban Design Commission shall consider in each case those of the following guidelines and requirements as may be appropriate to signage:

Signs. Because of the relationship between the University of Wisconsin Research Park and commercial activities of this area, it is necessary that the location and treatment of signs be appropriate to both activities. Signs in the district shall meet the following requirements and conform as much as possible to the following guidelines:

a. Requirements.

- i. Signs (including, but not limited to, awnings or canopies with signs), if located on or adjacent to buildings, shall be integrated with the architectural design of the buildings.
- ii. Signs shall be located and designed only to inform the intended clientele.
- iii. Signs shall be used only as identification of the establishment and shall have no more than a total of eight (8) symbols and/or words.
- iv. No portion of an illuminated sign shall have a luminance greater than two hundred (200) foot lamberts for any portion of the sign within a circle two (2) feet in diameter. No sign or part of any sign shall change its level of illumination more than once every one (1) hour. (Am. by ORD-09-00091, 8-1-09)
- v. Electronic changeable copy signs, if permitted in the District, shall comply with [Sec. 31.046\(1\)](#) which requires that electronic changeable copy signs in Urban Design Districts shall not alternate, change, fade in, fade out, or otherwise change more frequently than once every one (1) hour. (Am. by ORD-09-00091, 8-1-09)
- vi. A minimum setback of five (5) feet from the public right-of-way is required of all detached signs. A minimum setback of ten (10) feet from the public right-of-way is required for signs exceeding ten (10) square feet in net area. A minimum setback of twenty (20) feet is required for all signs exceeding twenty (20) square feet in net area. (Am. by ORD-09-00091, 8-1-09)
- vii. The height of a ground or wall sign shall not exceed ten (10) feet unless a higher sign is specifically approved by the Urban Design Commission based on the following criteria:
  - A. An exception from the height limitations is necessary for the sign located on the site of an establishment to be identifiable and legible from the nearest roadway at prevailing speeds; and
  - B. An exception from the height limitation will result in a sign more in scale with the building and site and will result in a superior overall design.
- viii. The net area of a ground or wall sign shall not exceed forty (40) square feet unless a larger sign is specifically approved by the Urban Design Commission based upon the following criteria:
  - A. An exception from the size limitation is necessary for the sign located on the site of an establishment to be identifiable and legible from the nearest roadway at prevailing speeds; and

- B. An exception from the size limitation will result in a sign more in scale with the building and site and will result in a superior overall design. (Am. by ORD-09-00091, 8-1-09)
- ix. All signs and their words shall be mounted parallel to the building surface to which they are attached. No sign or words shall project more than eighteen (18) inches from the surface to which they are attached. Attached signs shall not be mounted on roofs and shall not project above roofs.
- b. Guidelines.
  - i. Signs should identify the activity without imposing upon the view of businesses or activities of the district.
  - ii. A sign should be appropriate to the type of activity and clientele at which its message is aimed.
  - iii. Signs should be designed so as to be legible to the intended viewer in relation to the surrounding circumstances.
  - iv. Signs should avoid covering or impinging upon landscape features or significant structures.
  - v. Illuminated signs should be lit internally or from the ground, not with fixtures projecting from the sign.

**Wall Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance:** Summarizing Section 31.07, there shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater. Standard net area allows for 40% of the signable area, or two square feet of signage for each lineal foot of building frontage not to exceed 100% of the signable area. In no case shall the sign exceed 80 sq. ft. in net area.

**Proposed Wall Signage:** The applicant is proposing one wall sign facing the parking lot, consisting of a logo and internally illuminated individual channel letters. The sign would have a total net area of 39.38 sq. ft., which occupies 23.3% of the signable area. The existing sign is an internally illuminated box sign with a net area of 44.08 sq. ft. and occupies 26.1 sq. ft.

**Staff Comments:** The proposed wall sign complies with the sign ordinance, however it does not comply with the UDD #6 requirements related to height and therefore needs CDR approval from UDC.

**Recommendation:** Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review and UDD criteria have been met given the setback of the building and visibility of the signable area from the street. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.

**Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance:** This zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a combined net area of 160 sq. ft. Monument styled signs are allowed a maximum height of 12', and pole style ground signs are allowed a maximum height of 20', based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes.

**Proposed Signage:** The applicant is requesting two ground signs for the lot. One sign is an internally illuminated pole styled ground sign, located near the Beltline. The sign would have an overall height of 20' and a total net area of 80.56 sq. ft. The second proposed monument styled ground sign is located near Odana Road. This sign would have an overall height of 6' 10" and a total net area of 70 sq. ft. The artwork shows the address having a light background with dark text, which does not comply with the sign ordinance lighting requirements. The total net area between the two signs is 150.56 sq. ft.

**Staff Comments:** Besides the night view of the address on the monument styled ground sign near Odana Road, the proposed signage complies with the sign ordinance. However, the two proposed ground signs do not comply with UDD #6 requirements for:

- Setbacks. The Odana Road ground sign, 20-foot setback required where 5' is proposed,
- Height. The Beltline ground sign, 10-foot maximum where 20' proposed, and
- Net area. UDD #6 allows for a maximum net area of 40 sq. ft. The Odana Road sign has a net area of 70 sq. ft. and the Beltline ground sign has a net area of 80.56 sq. ft.

Therefore, CDR approval from the UDC for the proposed grounds signs is required.

**Recommendation:** Staff believes that the UDD #6 requirements and criteria for granting exceptions to the height and size of ground and wall signage have been met given the site context, character of the area, and proposed sig design. Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met, with the requirement that the Odana Road ground sign comply with the night lighting requirements. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.