



Agenda Item #: 3

Project Title: 4728 Sheboygan Avenue - Comprehensive Design Review of Signage (CDR) Located in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 6. 11th Ald. Dist.

Legistar File ID #: 70849

Members Present: Cliff Goodhart, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Shane Bernau, Jessica Klehr, Christian Harper, Rafeeq Asad and Russell Knudson.

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Summary

At its meeting of June 29, 2022, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Comprehensive Design Review located at 4728 Sheboygan Avenue in UDD No. 6. Registered and speaking in support were Sean Roberts, representing Summit Smith Development; and Mary Beth Growney Selene, representing Ryan Signs, Inc. Registered in support and available to answer questions was Shawn Zimny, representing Gilbane Development Co.

Growney Selene summarized the proposed signage package for Block 6, including ground signs and banners. Madison Yards is a unique development in the City of Madison, and while the staff report referenced Hilldale and East Towne Mall, this is not a shopping center. The entire development is turned inward, with the 14-acre development, including different owners on six separate lots; it is essential to provide signage for visitors to safely navigate the private streets within Madison Yards. The proposed monument signs allow for identification of occupants of interior facing spaces and will provide pedestrian and vehicular traffic with the assurance they are in the right place. The Corten steel landscape sign is internal to the site and will match interior details such as planters and bike racks that this Commission has already approved. The proposed colors will be neutral to each of the unique buildings where they are placed. Light pole banners will include Madison Yards identification, as well as seasonal and event promotions. The proposed 12-14 light pole banners over an expanse of 14 acres will not provide clutter, but rather add color and interest to the interior private streets and make the area more attractive to businesses and retailers facing challenges not even dreamed of three years ago.

The Commission discussed the following:

- I think the landscape sign is awesome, big thumbs up, the detailing light is really nice. I would agree that Madison Yards is not a shopping center; it presents itself as more of a unique part of the city, part of the urban fabric. That goes against having this large monument sign with all these brands at each point where you enter. I'm certain that I don't like the larger one, I could maybe live with the smaller one but I'd question if it's true to the brand of this place and really necessary.
- I'm indifferent to the banners, they don't do much for me. I would probably default to the staff comments and opinions on it being defined as a banner and subject to those parameters. I question whether it's really necessary for the success of your place.
- It's contradictory to have a monument sign if it's not a shopping center, these signs scream shopping center to me. The large one is way too big and detracts from the architecture standing behind it, it's too overwhelming. Less is more here, for the banners as well. As soon as you start stamping Madison Yards on everything you see, you don't see it anymore and it just becomes a label. I think that goes against what you're branding here. If you

have to have a monument sign it should be the small one, but I would argue against a monument sign at all. The banner doesn't celebrate anything other than your brand.

Action

On a motion by Asad, seconded by Harper, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (6-0).

Discussion on the motion was as follows:

- With regard to the monument signs, there are three considerations: the number of signs requested, the height of the sign, and the number/design/size of the tenant panels.
- The applicant is requesting four ground signs (the landscape sign in the center of the lot, as well as three ground signs at the driveway entrances) where code allows for only two. The net has not been calculated on what is being shown as compliant for all three; while they are showing compliant, the signs may not be if there were multiples.
- I didn't see strong objection to the additional ground sign.
- Is the landscape sign experienced from the University Avenue entrance in any meaningful way?
 - There is a significant grade difference, as you come up you would be seeing that at the corner but it is well above University Avenue.
- It's a very nice sign but is that what's driving the size of it?
 - It's actually the backdrop to our stage and is a central focal point for the public/private plaza. We have a stage and lawn area there, as you're coming up from Madison Yards Way westbound or southbound on Gardener Road you'll see that focal point.
- My opinion has evolved that the ground monument signs are not necessary in multiple locations. I'd be looking for more of a compromise or a reasonable plan for the quantity. That Corten sign might serve as a nice anchoring branding sign in some respects.
- You don't oppose tenant panels but you oppose monument signs at each driveway entrance?
- I don't feel the structured sign is needed at all at the University Avenue entrance.
- The recommendation is for UDC to make a determination whether or not it's appropriate to have a monument signs or appropriate to have Madison Yards branding in addition to the tenant signs. Multiple tenant panels tend to add a lot of bulk to signs, we need to consider that, a limited number of tenant panels is an option.
- For this type of urban project, the tenant monuments on Sheboygan and North Segoe seem foreign, they light up at night which seems like a shopping mall, and they are located on residential streets. The one on University makes sense, and the landscape sign is fantastic. If they are code compliant could we ask for them not to be lit?
- Certain things come with development: height, density, etc. and at some point we have to look at changing some of our approaches, one of which may be for signage. All signs aren't bad signs. Sometimes wayfinding is appropriate and not over doing it for interior developments. What they're proposing isn't wrong, it might not be what we currently do but we don't have a project like this as a precedent in Madison. I don't know that we should be basing it off what we did decades ago, maybe we should look at how we're developing and what this means as an internal development unique to this area. It could be appropriate if done tastefully. If lighting is a problem on residential streets then make a condition that it's not backlit.
- I'm seeing signs in three categories: signs that identify a brand, wayfinding signage, and advertising. You're saying this isn't a shopping mall, but it is being signed like one. There are other enclave neighborhoods with signs that say "Nakoma," or "Hilldale," but they're not going to list everything two streets over. That's where you balance what it is with how it should be signed. Right now the signs clearly yell shopping center. I agree the two signs should shut off or dim after a certain time of night.
- As a hybrid suggestion, just having 'Madison Yards' monument signs on Sheboygan and Segoe, which are residential streets, could still identify the place. Hilldale has a lot of internal signage and not all the tenants are represented when you're driving along Segoe, University or Midvale.

- I would accept that as an amendment, no tenant names on residential streets, just on University Avenue. This still allows for the monument signs at those locations just minus the tenants.
- The detail of the signs without tenant panels, could you clarify the motion to keep just the rectangular structural form and the Madison Yards lettering at the top, and open so a person could walk through there?
- Sure.

The motion noted the following:

- A total of four ground signs shall be permitted, including one each located at the development's University Avenue entrance, Segoe Road entrance, Sheboygan Road entrance, and a landscape monument located in the central green space.
- The proposed landscape monument ground sign located within the central green space is approved as noted on the plans dated May 31, 2022.
- The University Avenue ground sign shall be reduced in height not to exceed 10 feet. In addition, the tenant panels shall be reduced in size to 1 foot by 3'-7", and shall be designed to reflect dark background and light letters.
- The Segoe Road ground sign shall be reduced in height not to exceed 10 feet and the tenant panels shall be removed from this sign.
- The Sheboygan Road ground sign shall be reduced in height not to exceed 10 feet and the tenant panels shall be removed from this sign.
- The proposed changeable copy banners be redesigned to meet the definition of "decorative or promotional banners."