

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

August 14, 2019



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 525 Junction Road
Project Name: Johnson Financial Group/TDS
Application Type: Comprehensive Design Review Initial/Final Approval
Legistar File ID # [56772](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector
Reviewed By: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review INITIAL/FINAL Approval for signage at this new development. This property is located in a Planned Development (PD) District, which previously had a sign package approved by UDC. The shown signage remains the same, but is back for UDC approval because of a change to the Sign Ordinance (Sec. 31.13(4)), which requires previously approved sign packages to either comply with the sign ordinance for the selected zoning district assigned by the Zoning Administrator, or, if it cannot, obtain approval from the UDC through Comprehensive Design Review. The subject property is part of a Planned Multi-use site that includes two multi-tenant buildings \ and a large seven story office building. The property is adjacent to the beltline (4 lanes, 55 mph) and Junction Road (4 lanes, 30 mph).

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.*

Wall and Above-Roof Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Section 31.07, Wall signs may be attached flat to or affixed parallel with a distance of not more than 15 inches from the wall. No sign affixed flat against a building wall shall extend beyond any edge of such wall. There shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater. For buildings with more than one tenant, each tenant is allowed a signable area as reasonably close to its tenant space as possible. Standard net area allows for 30% of the signable area. In no case shall the sign exceed 120 sq. ft. in net area. For multi-story buildings with more than one vertical occupancy, *there may be up to two additional signable areas per façade displayed above the first story, with no limitation on the height of placement, but only one sign per occupant, per façade*

An above-roof sign is a sign, any portion of which is displayed above the roofline. Above-roof signs may be displayed in the IL and IG employment districts and as allowed in Sec. 31.04(2)(b)2.b.iii. and iv., if no wall or roof sign is displayed on the corresponding facade. The signable area for an above-roof sign is calculated on the corresponding wall facade and can be transferred above the roof line. An above-roof sign may extend to a maximum height of ten (10) feet above the roofline.

Furthermore, Section 31.043(3)(c) allows the UDC to permit the use of an above-roof sign when the architecture of the building does not provide a reasonable signable area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting approval for four eligible sign areas above the roofline, one for each elevation, on the main office building. The general north and south elevations would be reserved for one tenant (currently TDS) and the general east and west would for another tenant (currently Johnson Financial Group). Each TDS sign has a maximum net of 302.02 sq. ft. and each Johnson Bank sign has a maximum net of 373.1 sq. ft. The proposed Johnson Financial Group signs have a net of about 370 sq. ft. The proposal also identifies six smaller signable areas for other tenants in the building, located in qualifying signable areas, each allowed a maximum net of 48 sq. ft.

Staff Comments: The only wall signs in the CDR proposal that need special approval are the four above roof signs located on the architectural rooftop element that also screens mechanical equipment. As mentioned above, the UDC can grant approval for such signage, however the existing and proposed signs would have a maximum net area that exceeds what the code would allow, which requires CDR approval. The applicant provides images of the existing above roof signs viewed from the Beltline highway and beyond. The signs do not appear overly large and fits within the architectural elements designed specifically for signage, in addition to hiding the rooftop mechanical units. The proposed Johnson Financial Group sign will be slightly smaller in total net area and letter height, but appears similar in style to the existing sign. Wall signs on this building will be limited to individual channel letters, with the option of also having corporate “crests” or “shields” which for the sign code would be similar to a logo. The proposed net area and location of the other wall signage on this building shall comply with code. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

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., and a maximum height of 12’ for monument style signs, based off the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes. Additional ground signs are allowed by CDR.

Proposed Ground Signage: There are four existing ground signs: a double sided monument styled sign with two tenants listed facing the Beltline, a three sided monument styled directory sign near the building entrance on Junction Road, and two decorative monument signs displaying the address number of the neighboring building.

Staff Comments: The ground signs on site are existing and no new signage has been submitted. The applicant is requesting that the shown ground signage be re-approved by the UDC, to become part of the CDR. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

Other signs shown in CDR: The wall and awing signage mentioned in the application will comply with Chapter 31, and no special exceptions are being requested at this time, except that the east elevation be limited to awning signage and the west elevation limited to channel letters. Any noncompliant signs would be removed as tenant update/change locations and new signage would follow the approved CDR.

Notes:

- The applicant will provide dimensions of the existing ground signage for the final CDR submittal.
- Applicant shall add the note that all other signage not addressed in this CDR comply with Chapter 31.
- Applicant shall update elevations of proposed signage locations for the final CDR submittal.
- Applicant shall work with staff to update signage specification for 515 and 525 Junction.
- Any new ground signage for the zoning lot must come before the UDC for approval.