

# ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

September 6, 2023



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 202 North First Street  
**Project Name:** Madison Public Market  
**Application Type:** Comprehensive Design Review of Signage  
**Legistar File ID #** [72314](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

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The applicant is requesting a Comprehensive Design Review for signage for the new public market set to open in 2025. The site is located in a Commercial Corridor - Transitional (CC-T) District, as well as Urban Design District 4, and abuts North First Street (4 lanes, 25 mph) and East Johnson Street (5 lanes, 30 mph). The CDR request consists of two public market signs and two hall entrance signs, as well as eight tenant signs, one of which is not near its tenant space.

## Comprehensive Design Review Criteria

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.*

## Urban Design District 4 Guidelines and Requirements

Pursuant to Section 33.24(11)(d)(3), MGO, the Urban Design Commission shall consider in each case those of the following guidelines and requirements as may be appropriate to signage:

*Signs . The mixed land use patterns that characterize substantial portions of the district contribute to a proliferation of business and product identification signs which detract from the appearance of these areas.*

*a. Requirements .*

- i. Signs in the district shall conform to all provisions of [Chapter 31](#) of the Madison General Ordinances.*
- ii. Signs shall be integrated with the architecture of the building.*
- iii. 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. Additionally, no sign or portion of sign shall change its level of illumination more than once every one (1) hour. (Am. by ORD-09-00091, 8-1-09)*
- iv. Signs along East Washington Avenue west of First Street shall not be so high or so large that they detract from the view of the State Capitol.*

*b. Guidelines .*

- i. A sign should identify the activity without imposing upon the view of residents, businesses or activities of the district.*
- ii. A sign should be appropriate to the type of activity and clientele at which its message is directed.*
- 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 signs.*
- vi. Internally illuminated signs displaying illuminated copy shall be designed in such a way so that when illuminated, the sign appears to have light-colored copy on a dark or non-illuminated background.*

Wall Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing MGO Section 31.07, 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 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.

For a single occupancy or a tenant space with twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet or more in floor area in a multi-tenant building, the maximum net area of all wall signs shall be thirty percent (30%) of the signable area. In no case shall a wall sign exceed one hundred twenty (120) square feet in net area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting a total of twelve wall signs, each in a specific location. The north elevation would have two signs, one for the public market and the other for one of the tenant spaces by that entrance. The east elevation would have seven signs, five of which are for tenants along the space, one is for a tenant located elsewhere in the building, and one for the main entrance to the building. The south elevation would have one sign for the public market, however this elevation does not face a street or parking lot so it is not a qualifying elevation. Lastly, the west elevation would have two signs, one for the main entrance to the building and the other for a tenant at that entrance.

The Madison Public Market signs consist of individual open face channel letters with faux neon, the Main Hall signs consist of halo lit individual channel letters with a non-illuminated logo, TruStage Market Ready Hall signs consist of halo lit individual channel letters, and the smaller tenant panels are internally illuminated box signs with routed faces.

Staff Comments: The sign code permits one wall sign per qualifying elevation. If the building has multiple tenants, the building owner has the option of having more than one wall sign by allowing each tenant a wall sign on a qualifying elevation as close to their tenant space as possible. The way the ordinance is written, the building could either have just the Madison Public Market signs (aka "sense of place" signs), or the multiple tenant wall signs, but not both. To ask for multiple tenant signs in addition to the "sense of place" sign requires CDR approval, as well as having one of the tenant signs located elsewhere than immediately next to the tenant space and having a sign on an elevation that doesn't face a street or parking lot.

This building is expected to have numerous tenants, so the "sense of place" sign will assist with identification for the small or temporary tenants that would not have signage, and reserving the seven other wall signs for the larger or longer leased tenant spaces along the east side of the building. TrueStage MarketReady Hall is the only tenant space that technically does not have any frontage along the east elevation, and as the applicant is not proposing any ground signage, they are requesting CDR approval for this, so every major tenant space would have visibility from the street. The Madison Public Market signage will provide visibility along East Johnson Street and the other sign facing the private drive on the lot, while not a qualifying signable area, it will be visible from East Washington, which is the third CDR request. The signs are of high design and made of high quality materials, consisting either of halo lit or internal lit channel letters, or internally illuminated, routed face, cabinet signs. **Recommendation: Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review, as well as the guidelines for signage in UDD 4 have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**