



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
Building Inspection Division

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TO: Al Martin, Urban Design Commission Secretary
FROM: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator
DATE: October 4, 2010
RE: Proposed Signage Alterations, City Center West, 525-535 Junction Rd.

You asked me to take a look at the sign package and offer some comments for the UDC to consider when they review the request this Wednesday evening.

Parking structure signs

- I believe the parking structure is a free-standing detached structure (surrounded by open space on all sides) from the main office buildings. There are no specific tenant spaces in this structure, however, there may be assigned tenant parking. The signage proposed for the parking structure is unusual, I am not aware of any places in the City that offer this type of signage on parking structures. Since this signage is on a parking structure, this signage is not adjacent to the associated tenant space that one would typically see on a building.
- I think this signage serves a purpose greater than identifying the location of a tenant in the building, a building with “building topper” signs that results in the creation of a sense of place, as the “TDS/Johnson Bank” building. This seems like more in line with advertising associated with secondary tenants of the building, given its prominent location at the Beltline, rather than signage necessary for identification purposes.
- East-facing façade: The signable area calculation does not appear to be accurate. From the photograph submitted (it is sort of grainy, so it is hard to determine) there appear to be vertical architectural elements (columns and stair sections) which would break up the signable area shown into individual areas, rather than a single large signable area that spans the width of the ramp. In turn, 30% of the signable areas would result in smaller sign areas than shown. Probably closer to 100 sq. ft. This is still a generous sign, given the close proximity of the sign area on the structure to the beltline frontage.
- North and South facing facades: This is one of those situations where the architecture of a large facade allows for the possibility of a very large signable area. The signable area measurements for these elevations appear to be accurate, which will result in a large area for signable placement, prominently oriented to the beltline traffic. If the UDC should consider these signable elevations, they should also consider just how large the signs should be, rather than rely on the code-established 30% of the signable area allowed. The end result in this case could be signage that is out of scale for the parking building and not relevant to the office building, and put of scale to the beltline frontage.

- The sign ordinance that applies to the nearby Old Sauk Trails office park allows for a maximum of 100 sq. ft. for wall signs (RPSM district). This property is a mixed-use retail/office development, but it does have retail-type signage facing Junction Road for those retail tenants. Presumably, the new signs on the parking structure would be for office tenants.

Existing monument sign

- This sign includes corporate branding for the developer, who I do not believe is a tenant of the building. This type of branding falls into a category of advertisement rather than identification of tenants, and is not commonly found in the City. Also, the permanent nature of this type real estate sign is contrary to the temporary nature/needs of real estate signage, as described in the ordinance. I would recommend the UDC affirm this sign without corporate branding of the developer, and could also affirm this sign serving as the real estate signage for the development if they wish.

Existing “building topper” signs

- Memory tells me there is a loose agreement with the adjacent neighborhood/residents to have these signs turned off after 10pm. About once a year, the district Alderperson and Zoning Office receive complaints to this effect. It would be nice to firm up this agreement as part of this sign package, so staff can point to an actual condition of approval, rather than a informal arrangement. This may already be resolved with a previous alteration, but it would be good to re-state this condition as part of this alteration.