



**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•1339  
[www.detroitmi.gov](http://www.detroitmi.gov)

January 25, 2024

Honorable Detroit City Council  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

**Re: Planning and Development Annual Sign Waiver Hearing Report for the 2023  
Calendar Year**

In 2020, Your Honorable Body adopted an ordinance to amend Chapter 4 of the 2019 Detroit City Code to establish new regulations relative to signs. The effective date of the new sign ordinance was December 9, 2020. Sec. 4-4-22 of the sign ordinance assigns the authority for waivers and adjustments of sign standards to the Planning and Development Department (PDD). PDD administers a public hearing process for sign permit applicants to seek a waiver or adjustment of specified regulations via a Sign Waiver and Adjustment (SWA) Hearing.

As required in Section 4-4-22(o), PDD respectfully submits this report summarizing the SWA petitions the department has received during the 2023 calendar year, as well as the required suggested changes to the ordinance, and we respectfully request that you refer these changes to the Law Department for the creation of an ordinance.

- The number of SWA Eligibility applications received: 21
- Of those, 18 petitions were determined to be eligible for a waiver (two required correction and have not yet been resubmitted and one was withdrawn)
- The outcomes of the 17 hearings held: (two did not proceed, two were combined)
  - Seven (7) petitions were approved.
  - Four (4) petitions were approved with conditions, and
  - Four (4) petitions were denied.
  - Two (2) are pending or being amended

The locations of the premises for which petitions were submitted, and a summary of which waiver or adjustments were requested, is provided in the following table.

Project Address	Council District	Waiver Article	Waiver Type	Waiver Percentage/Count	Hearing Date	Hearing Outcome
1001 Woodward	D6	4-4-45(b)	Number	1 additional sign	02/16/23	Denied
1501 Wabash St	D6	4-4-42(d)	Size	128 sq ft/1167%	03/09/23	Approved
2640 S Fort	D6	4-4-45(b)	Number	3 additional	03/23/23	Approved with conditions
1465 Centre	D6	4-4-45(d)	height	43' (107%) and 18' (45%)	04/20/23	Approved with conditions
4128 Second	D6	4-4-42(d) & 4-4-36(b)(2)	size, brightness	24 sq ft(400%) and 40 nits (100%)	05/04/23	Denied
6201 Second	D5	4-4-62(a) and (b), 4-4-45(d)	size, height, corner	48%, 25%, and 14%	06/22/23	Approved
119 Garfield	D6	4-4-32(b) and 4-4-42(d)	Size	481%, 200%, and 6%	07/06/23	Approved with conditions
17000 E Eight Mile Road	D3	4-4-45	height	wall sign above roof	08/03/23	amending
2703 Park Ave.	D6	4-4-42(d & e)	area, projection	183%/26 sq ft and 12%/6"	08/17/23	Approved
1114 Washington Blvd	D6	4-4-42(d & e)	area, projection	63%/17.6 sq ft and 40%/19"	08/24/23	Approved
14301 Gratiot	D3	4-4-45(b)	Number	1	10/05/23	Approved
2420 Bagley	D6	4-4-45, 4-4-42	size, height	178%/10.7 sq ft and 33%/13'	01/25/24	Pending
170 E jefferson	D6	4-4-39	Number	1	11/09/23	Approved
4111 Central	D6	4-4-40	Size	91%/18.2 sq ft and 33%/5'	12/07/23	Denied
11741 Rosa parks	D5	4-4-45(b) and (d)	height, number	120%/48' and 1 additional	12/07/23	Denied
660 Woodward	D6	4-4-45(d)	height	45%/18'	01/04/24	Approved

**Recommended Ordinance Changes**

The sign ordinance also requires that PDD submit recommendations to Your Honorable Body for any proposed amendment of the Chapter 4 provisions. A summary of recommendations has been developed by PDD, in conjunction with the Law Department, Buildings & Safety Engineering, and the City Planning Commission staffs. In addition to the recommendations from the prior year's reports (attached), the recommended changes are as follows:

- Sec. 4-4-103: Prohibit advertising signs visible from and within 250' of an off-street greenway (such as the Joe Louis Greenway).
- Sec. 4-4-43: A raceway business sign may contain signage only for a single business.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this informative update regarding our hearing process and recommended changes to the sign ordinance. Please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or the Sign Waiver and Adjustment Hearing Officer, Russell Baltimore (baltimorer@detroitmi.gov) should you have any questions or require any additional information to proceed.

Respectfully Submitted,



Antoine Bryant  
Director, Planning & Development Department

CC:

- Dave Bell, Director, BSEED
- Eric Johnson, BSEED
- Tonja Long, Law Department
- Karen Gage, Director, Design & Development, PDD
- Russell Baltimore, Assistant Director, Design Review, PDD

## January 2022 Recommendations:

- Sec. 4-4-1: Clarify that “signs” must be intended for viewing by public
- Sec. 4-4-1: Existing standard for heritage signs is too restrictive: change the duration or some other standard
- Sec. 4-4-8: Permit incidental signs (hours of operation, “open”, ...) be permitted up to a limited area
- Sec. 4-4-20: Specify that painted signs may be installed by those without a sign erector license
- Sec. 4-4-20: Allow sign regulations in this Article to be superseded by those specifically approved under zoning
- Sec. 4-4-22: Decrease notice period and loosen requirements for posting of decision letters
- Sec. 4-4-39(c): Increase the permissible area of monument signs in higher density sign districts
- Sec. 4-4-41(b): Clarify the minimum width of sidewalks on which portable signs can be located
- Sec. 4-4-43: Clarify difference between wall and raceway signs and review standards
- Sec. 4-4-43 and 45: For multi-tenant buildings, increase number of raceway and wall signs to 1/ground floor tenant plus high-rise sign where applicable
- Sec. 4-4-47: Allow for “innovative sign construction” types that are not otherwise addressed in Article 4, Division 2, subject to approval on a case-by-case basis
- Sec. 4-4-49: Add the spacing provisions of portable signs to the permitted location of monument signs
- Sec. 4-4-62(b): Clarify the usage of “front” and add provisions for through lots
- Sec. 4-4-62: Clarify allocation of sign area for signs that are not facing a street and for corner lots
- Sec. 4-4-63(a)(2): Permit painted wall signs on taller buildings
- Sec. 4-4-63(a)(4): Don’t count directional signs within a premises toward business sign allowance
- Sec. 4-4-63: Restore previous provisions for businesses within shopping centers
- Sec. 4-4-63: Clarify that sign standards in this section apply only to those signs utilizing the additional aggregate area provided for in this section, and do not apply to base area allowed for per Section 4-4-62
- Sec. 4-4-64: Clarify that buildings within a campus that have street frontage receive their own sign area allocation
- Sec. 4-4-182: Increase size of temporary signs in higher density districts
- Sec. 4-4-182: Address signage for special events as part of special event application
- Add provisions specifically for gas station signs

## January 2023 Recommendations

- Sec. 4-4-42: Larger projection signs acting as an identification sign or where above the 2nd floor
- Permit large temporary signs for special events, such as the June 2023 Grand Prix (Sec. 4-4-183) Permit them to up a maximum size (20-30% of the facade), and above that can be considered via waiver
- Sec. 4-4-185: Permit business owners, as opposed to licensed sign erectors, to install temporary small banner wall signs (such as for grand openings and special events) of a limited size (12 square feet?)
- Sec. 4-4-128(b)(8): Don't permit advertising signs in the CBD on the portions of buildings that front on the street. (as opposed to the side or rear, such as when overlooking a parking lot or vacant lot, while still visible from the street).

