



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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

Phone 313•224•1339
www.detroitmi.gov

January 25, 2025

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 2024
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). After the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED) has determined that a sign is not eligible for a building permit, PDD determines if the permit is eligible for a waiver. If it is, 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 2024 calendar year, and we respectfully request that you refer the previously suggested changes to the Law Department for the creation of an ordinance.

- The number of SWA Eligibility applications received: 23
- Of those, 22 petitions were determined to be eligible for a waiver
- I. The outcomes of the 21 hearings held: (one was determined at the hearing to be ineligible)
 - Thirteen (13) petitions were approved.
 - Five (5) petitions were approved with conditions, and
 - Three (3) were denied

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
4421 Woodward	D6	4-4-7	Other		2/29/2024	Denied
3426 Mack	D5	4-4-39(c)	size	136%/163.3 sq ft	3/21/24.	Denied
1040 Woodward	D6	4-4-32, 4-4-42	size	383%/17 sq ft and	4/4/2024	Approved
6530 W. Outer Drive	D2	4-4-45	Number	1 add'l	4/11/2024	Approved
14250 plymouth	D7	4-4-39	Number, height	25%, 3%	4/25/2024	Approved
690 Amsterdam	D5	4-4-39 and 4-4-45(d)	Size, height	210% larger, 20% higher	4/18/2024	Approved with conditions
3564 Vernor Hwy	D6	4-442(d) and (e)	Size	358% larger, project 22%	4/11/2024	Approved
20250 Woodward	D2	4-4-39(c)	Size		1 4/25/2024	Approved with conditions
2125 Woodward	D6	4-4-45(d) and 4-4-62(b)	height, corner lot	245% taller	5/9/2024	Approved
2135 Michigan Ave	D6	4-4-42 (d) and (e)	area, projection	7 sq ft (116%) and 1.25 ft further	7/11/2024	Approved with conditions
1620 Michigan Ave	D6	4-4-32	area	800%/32 sq ft	7/3/2024	Approved
2764 W Grand Blvd	D5	4-4-43(b) and (d), 4-4-45(d)	height, number	43' (107) taller, 1 add'l project above roofline	8/15/2024	Approved
10 E Eight Mile	D3	4-4-40	area, height, setback, number	2 add'l signs, 1022% (122.6 sq. ft) larger, 74% (14 ft) taller, setback of 45% (7.5 ft) greater,	8/1/2024	Approved with conditions
6191 W Warren	D6	4-4-40(c) and (d)	size and setback	3 sq ft (25%) and 2.5 ft	8/8/2024	Approved
220 W Congress	D6	4-4-42(d) and (e)	size and projection	75.5 sf (629%) and 1.5 ft	8/15/2024	Denied
16030 E Edsel Ford	D4	4-4-103(3), 4-4-105(a)	height, spacing	35'(55%) height and spacing		Ineligible
2915 Hancock	D6	4-4-39(c)	Size	75% (15 sq ft)	10/24/2024	Approved
1900 E. Eight Mile	D3	4-4-62 (a)(2) and (b)	corner lot, area	25% increase (454 sq ft)	10/10/2024	Approved
2799 W. Grand Blvd	D5	4-4-62(b) and 4-4-45(d)	corner lot, height		11/7/2024	Approved
3111 Grand River Ave.	D6	4-4-40(d) and (c)	height, size	46% (7 ft.) taller and 21% (24.29 sq ft.) larger	10/31/2024	determined to be ineligible for waiver
119 Garfield	D6	4-4-32(c)	Size	200% (8 sq ft)	11/7/2024	Approved
17300 Southfield	D2	4-4-45(d)	height	75% (30')	1/9/2025	Approved
2015 Webb	D5	4-4-7	Cover arch. features, number		1 add'l 1/9/2025	Approved with conditions

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. We have no new recommendations to make, beyond the 28 submitted in the previous years (Attached).

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexa Bush', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alexa Bush
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

Attachments: Prior Recommendations

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).

January 2024 Recommendations

- 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.