

City of Detroit

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June 25, 2020

HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

RE: Request of SDG Associates, LLC on behalf of the Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority for PC/PCA (Public Center/Public Center Adjacent) Special District Review of proposed signs and trash compactor enclosure at the TCF Center at 1 Washington Boulevard (formerly Cobo Center). **(RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

REQUEST

The City Planning Commission (CPC) has received a request from SDG Associates, LLC on behalf of the Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority for PC/PCA (Public Center/Public Center Adjacent) Special District Review of proposed signs and trash compactor enclosure at the TCF Center at 1 Washington Boulevard (formerly Cobo Center). This request is being made consistent with the provisions of Section 50-3-222 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance.

PROPOSED PROJECT

New Signage

As a result of the rebranding of Cobo Center as TCF Center, a number of changes to signage and installation of new signs are proposed. Details of all changes to signage on and around the Center are included in the submission package; but this report will focus on proposed new exterior identification signs. Signs interior to the building have been updated with the new name and logo, but do not require PC/PCA review. A total of 93 existing exterior wayfinding signs were also updated to replace the Cobo name and logo with TCF.

New exterior identification signs are proposed in four locations (illustrations of the proposed signs are included on the last pages of this report):

- Three signs are proposed above the entrances on the eastern façade of the building where the large red COBO signs were previously located. The old signs were 520 square feet each and the proposed signs are 785 square feet each.
- One sign is proposed on the roof of the ballroom (formerly Cobo Arena) and will not be visible from the ground. As this sign will not be visible from a public right-of-way, it is not evaluated as a sign.
- At the northeast entrance to the building near the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Congress Street, three options were being considered: on the wall above the animated display, freestanding letters on top of the animated display, or a transparent sign on the doors below

the display. The petitioner invited the City Planning Commissioners to choose their preference. The transparent option applied to the glass below the animated display was the unanimous choice. (A rendering is included on page 6 of this report).

- Three signs are proposed on the ballroom near the roofline, one each facing north, south and east. These signs are each proposed to be 785 square feet. No signage has existed in this location before.

Based on the size of this building, 5,972 square feet of signage would be allowed if not for the 500 square foot maximum (This measurement accounts for the east, north and ballroom frontages only, not giving credit for the west or south/river frontages). The proposed exterior identification signs itemized above total 5,611 square feet. For developments that require City Council approval, the 500 square foot maximum may be waived per Section 4-4-7(a). In this case, because the building is very large and not all of the signs will be visible from one vantage point, the additional area is justifiable. Also, the building serves as a regional convention center which makes adequate signage very important for wayfinding, as many visitors may not be familiar with the area.

Trash Compactor Enclosure

Previously, all of the trash dumpsters have been located in the loading dock area where they are not visible. However, in an effort to divert food waste bound for the landfill, a dumpster specially designed for composting was installed. In order to minimize odors, it is required to be located in a sealed, temperature controlled area, which has resulted in a loss of space in the loading dock area. As a result, a compactor needs to be located outside the loading dock area near Atwater Street. A screen wall is proposed to conceal the compactor from ground level and a pergola will screen the view from above.

REVIEW & ANALYSIS – PCA District Review Criteria

There are eighteen PC and PCA District Review Criteria listed in Sections 50-11-67 and 50-11-97 of the Zoning Ordinance. The relevant criteria follow with staff analysis in italics:

(9) Appropriate buffering and screening of service, loading, refuse collection, mechanical and electrical equipment and parking areas should be provided.

The proposed screening for the exterior trash compactor is tasteful and the materials complement the surrounding area. The inclusion of a pergola to screen the view from above is especially commendable and shows the utmost level of attention that went into the design.

(11) Signage and graphics should be tastefully designed to be visually appealing and in character with surrounding development; they should provide needed information, direction and orientation in a clear and concise manner.

As a regional convention center, TCF Center is a destination for many people who may be unfamiliar with the area. Appropriate signage is necessary to identify the building and assist the public in navigating. Although several of the signs are rather large, due to the size of the building and the nature of the use, the additional proposed signage is reasonable.

Design

The Planning & Development Department has submitted a recommendation dated May 13, 2020 recommending approval of the proposed changes. It is attached for reference.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

On May 21, 2020, the City Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the proposed signs and trash compactor enclosure with the following standard condition:

That final site plans, elevations, landscape, lighting, and signage plans be submitted for City Planning Commission staff approval prior to making application for applicable permits.

Respectfully submitted,

ALTON JAMES, CHAIRPERSON



Marcell R. Todd, Jr., Director
Jamie J. Murphy, Staff

Attachments: Proposed TCF Signage Package
Proposed TCF Dumpster Enclosure
PDD Recommendation

cc: Arthur Jemison, Director, PDD
Katy Trudeau, Deputy Director, PDD
Russell Baltimore, Assistant Director Design Review
David Bell, Director, BSEED

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ALTERATIONS IN A PC/PCA ZONING DISTRICT
AT TCF CENTER, 1 WASHINGTON BLVD.**

BY COUNCIL MEMBER _____:

WHEREAS, SDG Associates, LLC, on behalf of the Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority, proposes new identification signs and a new trash enclosure at 1 Washington Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, 1 Washington Boulevard is located within an established PC/PCA (Public Center/Public Center Adjacent) zoning district; and

WHEREAS, work to be performed within a PCA zoning district requires Special District Review and the purpose of the PC/PCA zoning district classification is provided for in Sections 50-11-51 and 50-11-81 of the Zoning Ordinance as follows:

The PC Public Center District includes areas used or to be used for governmental, recreational, and cultural purposes of particular or special civic importance. All construction or other improvement within this district requires that the Planning and Development Department and the City Planning Commission review and make recommendation to City Council, as provided for in Article III, Division 6, of this chapter so as to ensure a completely harmonious, pleasing, and functional public center.

This district includes property in close proximity to the Public Center (PC) District, and the controls specified in this division are designed to prevent any uses or structures within the district from having a deleterious effect upon the public center. Uses in this district shall include, to the maximum extent possible, ground-floor commercial space or other space oriented to pedestrian traffic, to enhance the public streetscape and street-level activity; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Development Department has provided favorable review; and

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission has reviewed and recommended approval of the proposed alterations at its regular meeting of May 19, 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Detroit City Council hereby approves the proposed signage and trash enclosure depicted in drawings by SDG Associates, dated March 2, 2020, referenced in the staff report, with the following condition:

1. That final plans be reviewed by CPC staff for consistency with approval prior to application be made for applicable permits.



Proposed sign to be located above the entrances facing Washington Boulevard (east façade)
Three signs are proposed, one above each entrance



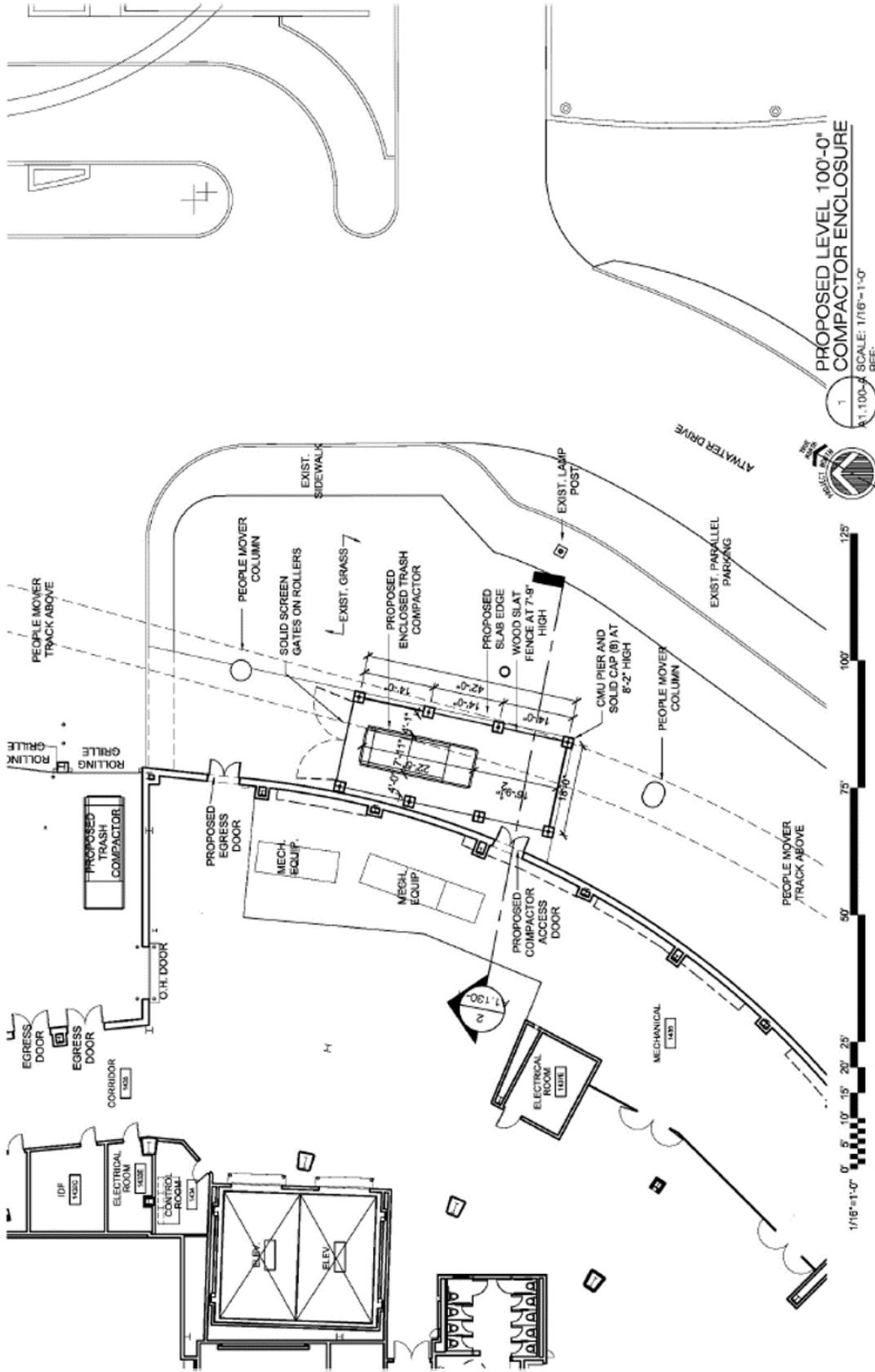
Proposed sign to be located on ballroom roof (not visible from ground)



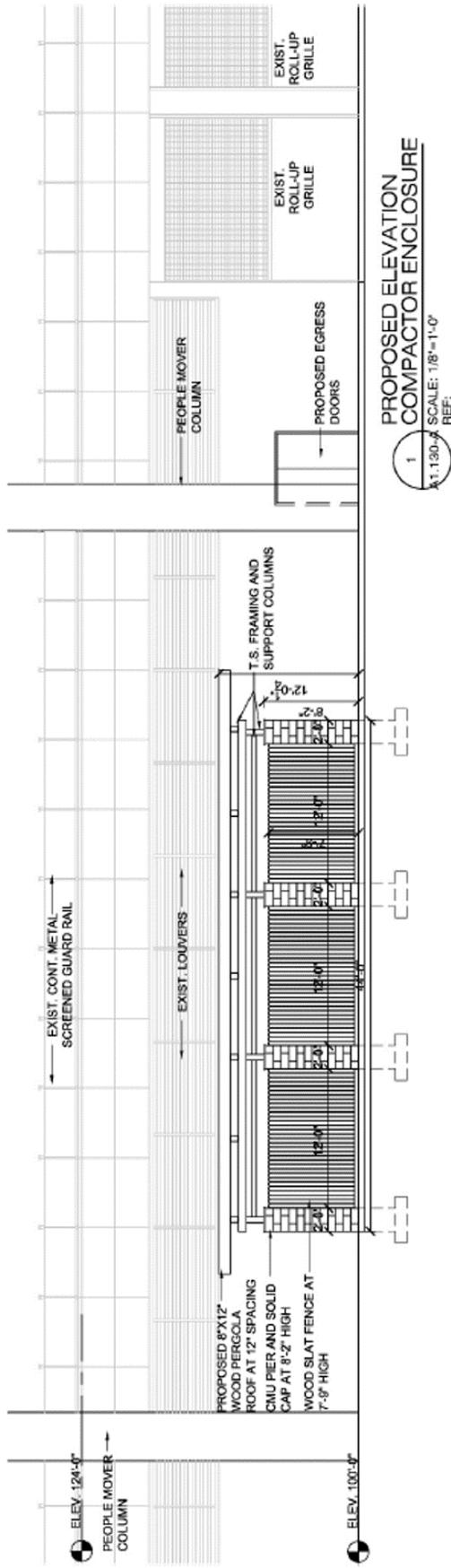
Proposed ballroom sign facing north – two other signs are proposed facing east and south (three signs total)



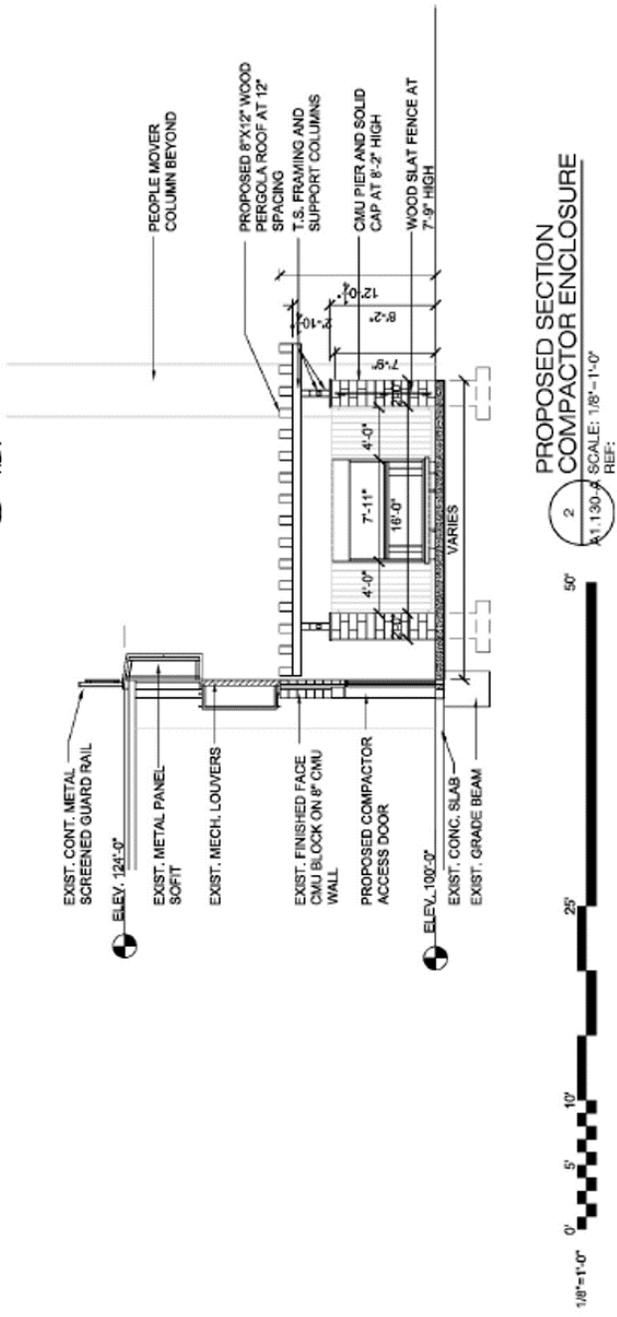
Proposed signage at the corner of Washington Blvd. and Congress St. Three options were considered and the City Planning Commissioners preferred this one.



1
 PROPOSED LEVEL 100'-0"
 COMPACTOR ENCLOSURE
 SCALE: 1/16"=1'-0"
 REF.



1
PROPOSED ELEVATION
COMPACTOR ENCLOSURE
 SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"
 REF.



2
PROPOSED SECTION
COMPACTOR ENCLOSURE
 SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"
 REF.

