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Director

# City of Detroit

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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June 18, 2021

## HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

**RE:** Request of 305 Michigan Avenue, LLC for PCA (Public Center Adjacent) Special District Review of a proposed super advertising sign at 305 Michigan Avenue a.k.a. Gabriel Houze. (**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**)

## REQUEST

The City Planning Commission (CPC) has received a request from 305 Michigan Avenue, LLC for PCA (Public Center Adjacent) Special District Review of a proposed super advertising sign to be located at 305 Michigan Avenue. This request is being made consistent with the provisions of Section 50-3-222 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance.



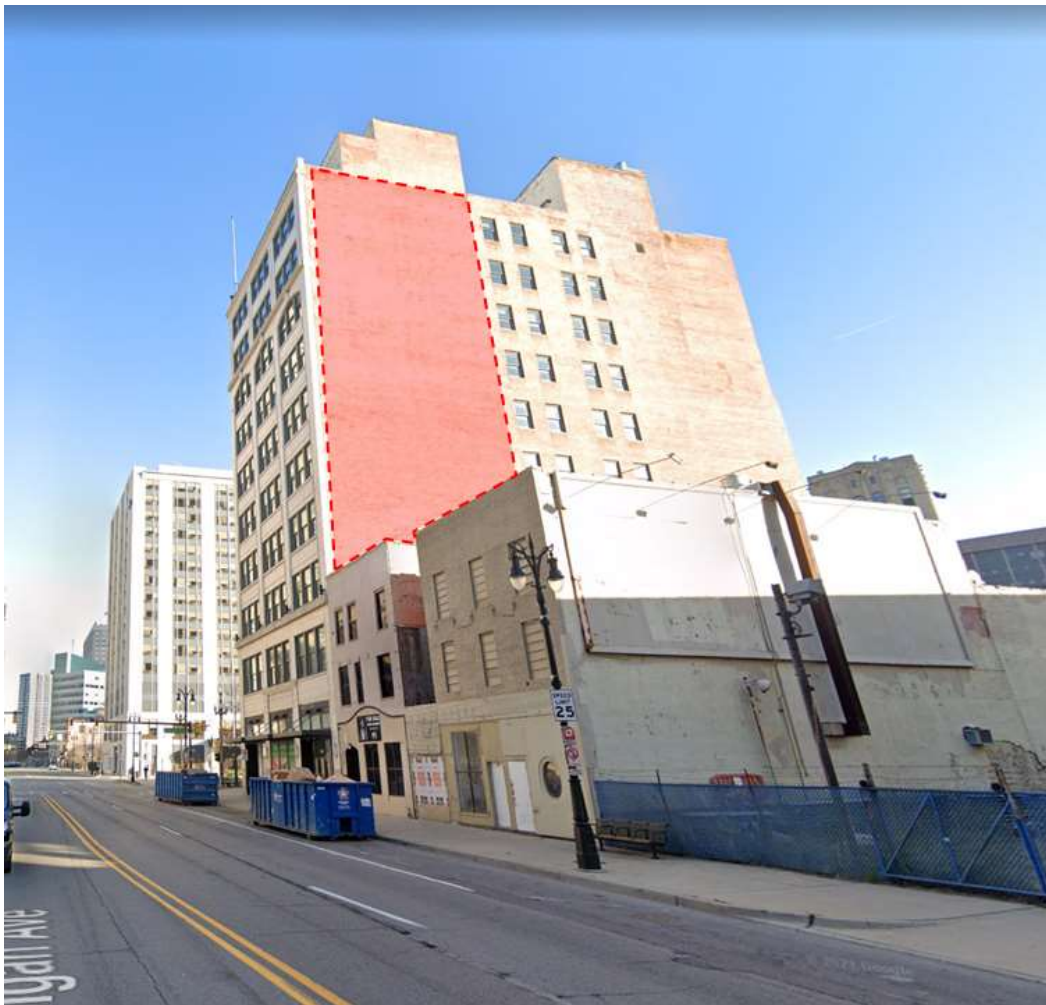
*Subject premises – 305 Michigan Ave.*

## **PROPOSED PROJECT**

The updated sign ordinance that was enacted in 2020 allows for new advertising signs in the Central Business District (CBD). The specific regulations governing these signs are located in Chapter 4, Article IV, Division 5 of the 2019 Detroit City Code. Because this site is zoned PCA, all exterior changes require review by Your Honorable Body.

The petitioner proposes to erect a 90' high by 40' wide (3600 square feet) vinyl mesh sign on the west side of the building. The content of the sign is not subject to review and would change periodically. The proposed sign meets the regulations in the ordinance including:

- Must be constructed as a wall sign
- No more than one advertising sign per premises
- Area must be greater than 700 square feet, not exceed 80% of the area of the façade, and a maximum of 5,000 square feet
- Height cannot exceed the height of the roof line or parapet
- Clearance must be at least 10 feet (distance between the bottom of the sign and the ground)
- May be externally illuminated but not internally illuminated
- May not be dynamic (electronic)



*Proposed Sign Location – facing west toward Cass Ave. & the McNamara Federal Building*

As part of the review process for advertising signs in the CBD, findings by several City departments are required including:

- Department of Public Works – placement of the advertising sign on the premises will not impair the traffic safety of motorists and pedestrians
- Chief Financial Officer – neither the applicant nor the owner of the premises to which the sign is sought to be placed is in arrears to the City for any unpaid, outstanding, or delinquent property tax, income tax, personal tax, or special assessments
- Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department – neither the applicant nor the owner of the premises to which the sign is sought to be placed is the subject of any outstanding violations of the Detroit City Code
- Fire Marshall – the premises are not in violation of Chapter 18, *Detroit Fire Prevention and Protection Code* and that the placement of the advertising sign on the premises will not cause any such violation
- Any other federal, state, or local governmental agency that may be necessary for construction, erection, or operation of the sign, including, but not limited to, approval by the Michigan Department of Transportation or the Detroit Historic District Commission

This review process has not concluded, but is being conducted concurrently with the PCA Review. However, all findings are required before a permit can be issued.

### **REVIEW & ANALYSIS – PCA District Review Criteria**

There are eighteen PCA District Review Criteria listed in Section 50-11-97 of the Zoning Ordinance. The relevant criterion follows with staff analysis in italics:

(2) Scale, form, massing and density should be appropriate to the nature of the project and relate well to surrounding development. *The proposed sign is located on a blank wall and appears appropriate.*

(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. *The proposed sign meets the standards and spirit of the ordinance. The proposed location is appropriate as it does not cover any architectural details, is not located on a primary façade, and does not detract from the appearance of the building.*

### ***Design***


The Planning & Development Department has reviewed the proposed signage and supports approval. The full recommendation is attached.

### **CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION**

Consistent with the above, the City Planning Commission staff recommends approval of the proposed sign.

Respectfully submitted,

LAUREN HOOD, CHAIRPERSON



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

Attachment: Petition for Special District Review in a PCA District  
Signage Wall Report – 305 Michigan Ave, prepared by Silman, dated 11/11/2020  
PDD Recommendation  
Resolution

cc: Katy Trudeau, Interim Director, PDD  
Greg Moots, PDD  
David Bell, Director, BSEED  
Eric Johnson, BSEED

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ALTERATIONS IN A PCA ZONING DISTRICT  
AT 305 MICHIGAN AVE.**

**BY COUNCIL MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_:**

**WHEREAS**, 305 Michigan Avenue, LCC, proposes a new super advertising sign at 305 Michigan Avenue; and

**WHEREAS**, 305 Michigan Avenue is located within an established PCA (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 PCA zoning district classification is provided for in Section 50-11-81 of the Zoning Ordinance as follows:

*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 staff has, on behalf of the City Planning Commission, reviewed and recommended approval of the proposed alterations in accordance with Section 7.5 of the City Planning Commission bylaws;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Detroit City Council hereby approves the proposed signage depicted in drawings by Silman and dated 11/11/2020, referenced in the staff report, with the following condition:

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

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That upon satisfaction of other required reviews the Building Safety Engineering and Environmental Department may issue corresponding permits.



**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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Marcell R. Todd Jr., Director  
Detroit City Planning Commission  
208 CAYMC  
Detroit, MI 48226

June 11, 2021

Dear Director Todd:

Following is the review by the Planning and Development Department of an externally illuminated 3,600 square foot wall-mounted advertising sign proposed for 305 Michigan Ave. (BSEED Permit numbers SGN2021-00088) As the property is zoned PCA (Public Center Adjacent), this review is required under Sec. 50-11-96.

The relevant PCA criteria from Sec. 50-11-97 of the Zoning Ordinance are followed by our analysis in italics:

*Criterion 2:* Scale, form, massing and density should be appropriate to the nature of the project and relate well to surrounding development; *The proposed sign is located on a blank wall and appears appropriate.*

*Criterion 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; *The advertising sign location is in character with the building and does not cover any architectural features.*

The Planning and Development Department supports the requested installation of an advertising sign on the building 305 Michigan Ave. This support is of course contingent on the sign meeting all Federal, State, and City regulations. We conclude that the proposed advertising sign will not significantly negatively impact the character of the surrounding downtown area adjacent to the Public Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory Moots  
Lead Planner-Design and Developer Innovation  
Planning and Development Department

CC: Karen Gage  
Russell Baltimore



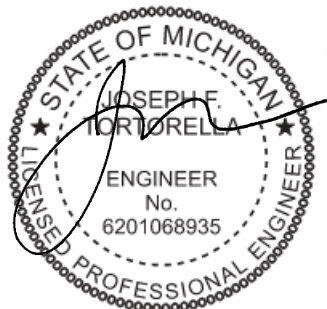
## CITY OF DETROIT SIGNAGE WALL REPORT

Date:	Mon., Nov. 11, 2020	Date on site:	Nov. 5, 2020
Attention:	Michael Richards	Project name:	Gabriel Houze
Company:	Total Outdoor	Silman project #:	19837
Report:	City of Detroit Signage Wall Report	Location:	305 Michigan Ave Detroit, MI
Owner:	305 Michigan Ave LLC	Present at site:	Ariana Sabbat, Silman Chris Kelley, Silman
Submitted by:	Jenna Bresler, PE	cc:	305 Michigan Ave LLC

Silman has been retained to perform a limited façade assessment for compliance with the City of Detroit Signage Ordinance Review. The purpose of this memo is to assess the structural condition of the wall that is to support the signage, document observations and provide conclusions and recommendations that attest to the ability of the existing building wall to support the existing or proposed exterior signage.

Silman's site observations occurred from grade using binoculars. Silman did not review the remainder of the building exterior nor did Silman review the interior conditions of the building, including the interior elevation of the wall that is to support the signage. Therefore, Silman cannot attest to any conditions other than the exterior façade against which the new signage is being anchored. The conditions and conclusions in this report are in keeping with the "general inspection" requirements of the façade as defined in ASTM E2270 Standard Practice for Periodic Inspection of Building Facades for Unsafe Conditions per the Signage Ordinance.

No existing drawings or documentation was received for this building. It should be noted that this report does not check the design of the signs, including the sign material, cables, wind loads, or anchorage to the building. Conclusions and recommendations will indicate whether the loads imparted by the signage to the building will be adequately supported by the building, given the current conditions of the wall at the time when the visual review was performed. Silman's review was based on the existing sign or the proposed sign as designed by Total Outdoor and assumes that the sign will not change the wind loads to the wall. The design of all materials and assemblies beyond the building wall/frame is the responsibility of Total Outdoor.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### BUILDING:

- Building Name: Gabriel Houze
- Building Address: 305 Michigan Ave, Detroit, MI 48226
- Owner Name: 305 Michigan Ave LLC
- District: Detroit Central Business District
- Parcel Number: 2000232
- Zoning District: PCA
- Type of Signage: Wall Static
- MDOT Permit Number: Y 101301

### SIGN:

- Signage Construction: Wall Sign
- Signage Class: Super
- Material: Vinyl Mesh
- Size (H x W): 90' x 40'
- Area: (3600 square feet)
- Max % of Façade: 80%
- Façade Orientation that Signage is to attach: West
- Highest Level of Sign: Parapet
- Lowest Level of Sign: 10' Above Grade
- Sign Total Weight (lbs.): 303
- Illumination: Yes
- Entertainment District (Yes/No): No



# SITE PLAN



Figure 1 Site Plan (Google Maps)

**WALL ELEVATION**



**Figure 2** Wall Elevation *(Photo by Silman)*

## **STRUCTURAL CONDITION ASSESSMENT**

As requested, Silman performed a visual assessment of the exterior west façade wall (facing Cass Ave); review of the façade was conducted at grade via binoculars and completed on November 5, 2020. The building appears to be ten stories plus rooftop penthouse levels at the north and south ends. The façade is comprised of brick. The framing within the building could not be determined from this visual assessment. Most of the brick exterior was in good condition, except for localized areas at the penthouse and near the roof.

While the signage is currently not attached to the building, the signage anchors are attached and anchored to the brick (Figure 2). It does not appear that the conditions observed during the review are caused by the sign anchorage nor impact these sign anchors.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of Silman's review, the building façade that is to support the signage is in good condition. There are no signs of distress in the wall where the anchors are secured. Given the approximate load of the sign and the visible conditions, the wall can support the signage as designed by Total Outdoor.

Please note that this report only addresses the existing walls condition and adequacy to support such signage and assumes that the sign will not impart any additional wind loads (suction) on the building. Responsibility for the connections and adequacy of the signage itself, lies solely with the sign manufacturer.



