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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Jamie Murphy, Staff

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 sculpture at the Huntington Place at 1 Washington Boulevard (formerly TCF Center). (**RECOMMEND APPROVAL**)

DATE: April 19, 2022

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 sculpture at the Huntington Place at 1 Washington Boulevard (formerly TCF 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 TCF Center (formerly Cobo) as Huntington Place, 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 exterior identification signs as the interior signage does not require PC/PCA review and the wayfinding changes are relatively minor.

The signage proposed is the same as that approved for the TCF Center rebranding in 2020 except for the new name and logo. Some of the previously-approved TCF signage was not installed but approval of similar signs is being requested. The identification signs are as follows (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 facing Washington Blvd. Currently, temporary vinyl signs occupy these locations, but permanent internally-illuminated signs on an aluminum backing are proposed.
- One sign is proposed on the roof of the ballroom (formerly Cobo Arena) and will not be visible from the ground or illuminated.
- Three signs are proposed on the ballroom near the roofline, one each facing north, south and east. No signage has existed in this location before, but similar signs were approved in the TCF package and not installed.

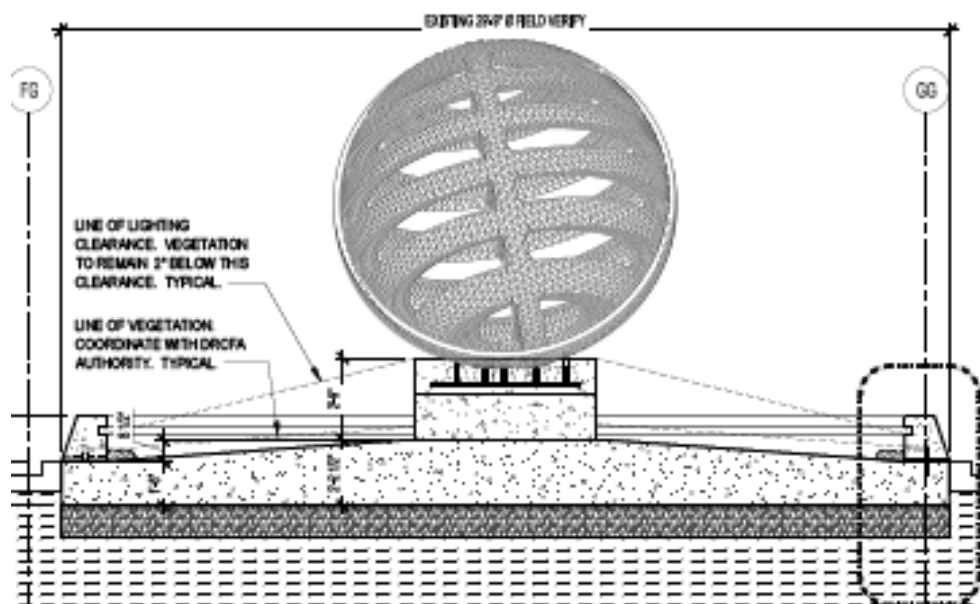
The TCF sign package was reviewed under the old sign ordinance before the current Chapter 4 sign ordinance went into effect. Under the new sign ordinance, any sign erected by a governmental agency or authority is exempt from requirements. Thus the size and number of signs is unrestricted, but they are still subject to review and the Review Criteria.

Sculpture

Another exterior change being proposed is the installation of a new sculpture at the circular drop-off area near the intersection of Washington Boulevard and West Jefferson Avenue. The spherical sculpture measures six feet across and will be installed in an existing landscape bed.



Rendering of proposed sculpture



Section drawing of proposed sculpture in landscape bed

REVIEW & ANALYSIS – PC 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:

(2) Scale, form, massing and density should be appropriate to the nature of the project and relate well to surrounding development.

The proposed signs and sculpture are appropriate for the scale of the building.

(3) The proposed development should be compatible with surrounding development in terms of land use, general appearance and function and should not adversely affect the value of adjacent properties.

The proposed changes are compatible with surrounding development.

(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 April 19, 2022 recommending approval of the proposed changes. It is attached for reference.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Generally, staff is fine with the proposed new signage, but for a minor concern with the wall mounted signs above the entry points. We are fine with the method by which they are to be affixed to the exterior wall and the appearance as described. However, the depiction of the signs in the included materials is a bit inconsistent with that description. The signs are to be carried on a gray aluminum backing panel that will obscure view of the connecting hardware and power supply. This panel will also cover the underlying wall surface and pattern as well as project from the wall. The depictions provided show the signage fixtures applied directly to the wall preserving more of the existing appearance than will be the case. The final set of drawing to be presented to Council for approval should include more accurate depictions of this signage as it will be installed. With this understanding and based upon the above analysis, the City Planning Commission staff recommends approval of the proposed signs and sculpture.

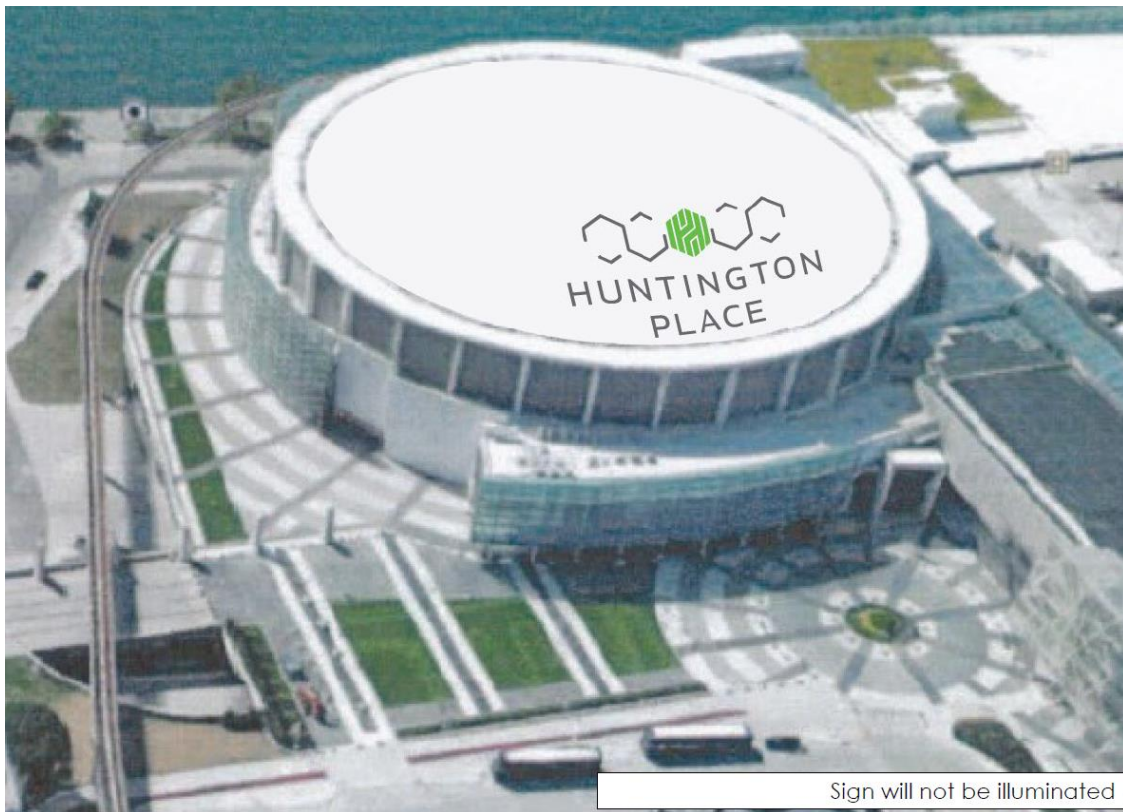
Attachments: TCF Signage Package – Huntington Place Rebranding
Sculpture Presentation – Huntington Place
PDD Recommendation

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, PDD
Karen Gage, PDD
Russell Baltimore, PDD
Greg Moots, PDD
David Bell, Director, BSEED

James Foster, BSEED
Eric Johnson, BSEED
Daniel Arking, Law Department



*Proposed sign to be located above entrance facing Washington Boulevard (east)
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)