

## **SUMMARY**

This ordinance amends Chapter 21 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, *History*, Article II, *Historic Districts and Landmarks*, Division 5, *Designated Districts*, to add Section 21-2-253, *Conductors Protective Assurance Building (C.P.A. Building) Historic District*, and to define the elements of design for the district.

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

2 **AN ORDINANCE** to amend Chapter 21 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, *History*, Article  
3 *II, Historic Districts and Landmarks*, Division 5, *Designated Districts*, to add Section 21-2-253,  
4 *Conductors Protective Assurance Building (C.P.A. Building) Historic District*, and to define the  
5 elements of design for the district.

6 **IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT**

7 **THAT:**

8 **Section 1.** Chapter 21 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Article II, Division 5, is amended to  
9 add Section 21-2-253 as follows:

10 **CHAPTER 21. HISTORY**

11 **ARTICLE II. HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS**

12 **Division 5. Designated Districts**

13 **Section 21-2-253. Conductors Protective Assurance Building (C.P.A. Building) Historic**  
14 **District.**

15 **(a) A historic district to be known as the Conductors Protective Assurance Building**  
16 **(C.P.A. Building) Historic District is established in accordance with the provisions of this article.**

17 **(b) This historic district designation is certified as being consistent with the Detroit**  
18 **Master Plan of Policies.**

19 **(c) The boundaries of the C.P.A. Building Historic District are as shown on the map**  
20 **on file in the Office of the City Clerk, and are as follows: beginning at a point, that point being the**  
21 **intersection of the centerline of Michigan Avenue with the centerline of Fourteenth Street; thence**  
22 **northerly along the centerline of Fourteenth Street to the centerline extended of the East-West alley**  
23 **first north of Michigan Avenue; thence westerly along said alley centerline to the westerly line**

1 extended of Lot 3 “Subdivision of the Godfroy Farm, P.C. 726 lying between Michigan Ave. and  
2 Grand River Ave.” as recorded in Liber 1, Page 293 Plats, Wayne County Records; thence  
3 southerly along said westerly line of Lot 3 extended to the centerline of Michigan Avenue; thence  
4 easterly along the centerline of Michigan Avenue to the centerline of Fourteenth Street and the  
5 Point of Beginning.

6 (d) The elements of design for the district, as defined in Section 21-2-2 of this Code,  
7 are as follows:

8 (1) Height. The C.P.A. Building in the district is six (6) stories tall.

9 (2) Proportion of buildings’ front façade. The C.P.A. Building has three (3) primary  
10 façades. The Michigan Avenue (south) façade is composed of three (3) bays and is  
11 taller than wide, and the Fourteenth Street (east) façade is composed of six (6) bays,  
12 and is approximately as tall as wide. The corner (southeast) façade is a single bay  
13 wide and is much taller than wide.

14 (3) Proportion of openings within the façades. The first floor of the corner (southeast)  
15 façade and the fourth bay from the southeast corner of the Fourteenth Street (east)  
16 façade are each occupied by a double-door entrance opening with a square transom  
17 above, resulting in an opening taller than wide. The ground floors of the façades  
18 along Michigan Avenue (south) and Fourteenth Street (east) have large openings  
19 originally occupied by display windows with segmentally arched three (3)-part  
20 subdivided transom windows above. The ground floor of the rear (north) elevation  
21 has a single large square window opening, located to the east of its single-door-  
22 wide entrance opening. Window openings above the first floor of all elevations are  
23 two (2) times taller than wide and are occupied by double-hung sash windows, with

1 the exception of the rear elevation, which has square openings, each containing a  
2 pair of similar double-hung sash windows. First-floor openings are covered with  
3 wood protective boarding.

4 (4) *Rhythm of solids to voids in the front façade.* A regular rhythm of solids to voids  
5 exists on all primary façades. The entrance to the first floor is located on the single-  
6 bay corner (southeast) façade. The entrance to the upper floors is located in the  
7 fourth bay from the southeast corner of the Fourteenth Street (east) façade,  
8 interrupting the regular rhythm of the display windows. Window openings above  
9 the ground floors of the multi-bay Michigan Avenue (south) and Fourteenth Street  
10 (east) façades contain two (2) separate openings per bay, creating a strong regular  
11 rhythm.

12 (5) *Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets.* Not applicable to a single building  
13 district.

14 (6) *Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections.* Not applicable to a single building  
15 district.

16 (7) *Relationship of materials.* Bedford limestone is the major building material and  
17 contrasts with a six (6) foot tall granite base. Glass used in display windows and  
18 sashes was originally a major material, its transparency contrasting with solid  
19 masonry, although first-floor display windows are presently boarded for protection.  
20 Cast masonry is used for decorative panels, dentils, rosettes, and other details.  
21 Window frames and sash are wood. The unembellished west elevation is brick.

22 (8) *Relationship of textures.* Limestone with a matte finish and mortar joints contrasts  
23 with the texture of the granite base, originally smooth. The textures created by the

1 repetition of elements such as pilasters and spandrels, and of details such as rosettes  
2 and dentils, create textural interest, as does the low relief ornamentation  
3 surrounding the two (2) major entrances.

4 (9) Relationship of colors. The off-white limestone contrasts with the light gray granite  
5 base. The window frames and sash are green; however, the original color is  
6 unknown. The majority of the brick on the west elevation is off-white; its lower  
7 stories that originally abutted a lower building are now painted white. The neon  
8 signage over the primary entrances is green with white lettering.

9 (10) Relationship of architectural details. Regularly arranged, repetitive details in the  
10 reserved Neoclassical style embellish the C.P.A. Building. Projecting pilasters  
11 rising six (6) stories define the bays; beneath the projecting window sills in the  
12 second through sixth stories are spandrels, each with a rosette in its center. The  
13 finished façades are capped by dentilled cornices. The two (2) entrances are heavily  
14 embellished with large, beaded consoles holding up the dentilled cornice. The upper  
15 panels between the console brackets, originally incised with the name, “C.P.A.  
16 Building,” were covered with neon C.P.A. Building signs. The flat, precast panels  
17 framing the doorways feature symmetrically arranged, low-relief ornamental  
18 details representing garlands, cornucopias, and shields, and are framed with bead  
19 and reel and egg and dart moldings. A large, square clock is situated beneath the  
20 lintel of the Michigan Avenue and Fourteenth Street corner entrance, although a  
21 historic photograph shows a round clock originally affixed at that location. The  
22 current clock is non-original. Original ground-level windows and doors were

1 replaced at an unknown time. Non-historic black security window bars were also  
2 added at a later date.

3 (11) Relationship of roof shapes. The flat roof of the C.P.A. Building cannot be seen  
4 from the street.

5 (12) Walls of continuity. The C.P.A. Building, sitting on its front lot line, continues the  
6 pattern of the commercial row to its east across Fourteenth Street. West of the  
7 C.P.A. Building, the wall of continuity is broken by the absence of other buildings  
8 once comprising the streetscape.

9 (13) Relationship of significant landscape features and surface treatments. No  
10 significant landscape features and surface treatments exist within the district. Curbs  
11 and sidewalks are concrete.

12 (14) Relationship of open space to structure. The C.P.A. Building occupies its original  
13 footprint. A former drive-through structure/canopy was added after the period of  
14 significance to the west side of the C.P.A. Building and is considered non-historic;  
15 a large, paved lot extends westward to the western property line of Lot 3 to the west  
16 of the C.P.A. Building.

17 (15) Scale of façade and façade elements. The scale of the six (6) story, full lot C.P.A.  
18 Building is greater than the row of two (2) to three (3) story commercial buildings  
19 in its vicinity. Façade elements such as pilasters, display windows, and entrances  
20 are also large in scale.

21 (16) Directional expression of front façade. The directional expression of the corner and  
22 south façades is vertical; the length of the east façade is tempered by the verticality  
23 of the pilasters separating the bays.

- 1        (17) *Rhythm of building setback.* Not applicable to a single-building district.
- 2        (18) *Relationship of lot coverage.* The C.P.A. Building occupies almost all of its  
3        triangular lot, Lot 4, except for a small portion abutting its rear (north) wall. Lot 3,  
4        located to the west of Lot 4, of the subdivision of the Godfroy Farm, containing the  
5        non-historic addition of the former drive-through structure/canopy and a parking  
6        lot, is mostly vacant land. Lot 3 is considered non-contributing to the district.
- 7        (19) *Degree of complexity within the façade.* The corner location and triangular lot of  
8        the C.P.A. Building results in three (3) major ornamental façades and five (5)  
9        elevations. The major façades are not complex due to the building's  
10       straightforward Neoclassical style. Surrounding the two (2) entrances is a hierarchy  
11       of classical detail, resulting in greater complexity.
- 12       (20) *Orientation, vistas, overviews.* The C.P.A. Building, sited on the angled corner of  
13       Michigan Avenue and Fourteenth Street, facing Michigan Central Station and  
14       Roosevelt Park, is primarily oriented towards the southeast corner of the site. Due  
15       to its height, location, and surroundings, dramatic views of downtown Detroit to its  
16       east and Michigan Central Station to its south, C.P.A. Building is one of the most  
17       prominent buildings in the Michigan Avenue corridor.
- 18       (21) *Symmetric or Asymmetric Appearance.* The general appearance of the major  
19       façades is symmetrical. On the Fourteenth Street (east) façade, the entrance bay is  
20       located in the fourth of the six (6) bays from the southeast corner, resulting in  
21       asymmetry only on the first floor.
- 22       (22) *General environmental character.* The C.P.A. Building is located on the western  
23       end of the commercial corridor of Corktown, a neighborhood of small-scale


1           residential and commercial buildings from the Victorian era (mid-1800s) to the  
2           early twentieth century. Its Neoclassical design relates to the grandiosity of the  
3           classically inspired Michigan Central Station to its south, causing it to stand out  
4           from the earlier commercial row to its east. The construction of I-75 alters its  
5           relationship to the original street pattern and neighborhood northward.

6           **Section 2.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are repealed.

7           **Section 3.** This ordinance is declared necessary for the preservation of the public peace,  
8 health, safety, and welfare of the people of the City of Detroit.

9           **Section 4.** If this ordinance is passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of City Council  
10 members serving, it shall be given immediate effect and shall become effective upon publication  
11 in accordance with Section 4-118(1) of the 2012 Detroit City Charter; otherwise, it shall become  
12 effective on the thirtieth (30) day after enactment, or on the first business day thereafter, in  
13 accordance with Section 4-118(2) of the 2012 Detroit City Charter.

Approved as to Form:

  
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Conrad D. Mallett  
Corporation Counsel