

City of Detroit

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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 trash compactor enclosure at the TCF Center at 1 Washington Boulevard (formerly Cobo Center). **(RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

DATE: May 18, 2020

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 exterior identification signs as the interior signage does not require PC/PCA review and the wayfinding changes are relatively minor. 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 are being considered, either above or below the animated display. Option 2 with the sign attached to the wall near the roofline is preferred. This sign is proposed to be 900 square feet.

- 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. Because the building serves as a regional convention center, adequate signage is also important for wayfinding.

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. It is required to be located in a sealed, temperature controlled area to minimize odors 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 letter dated May 13, 2020 recommending approval of the proposed changes. It is attached for reference.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the above, the City Planning Commission staff recommends approval of the proposed signs and trash compactor enclosure.

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



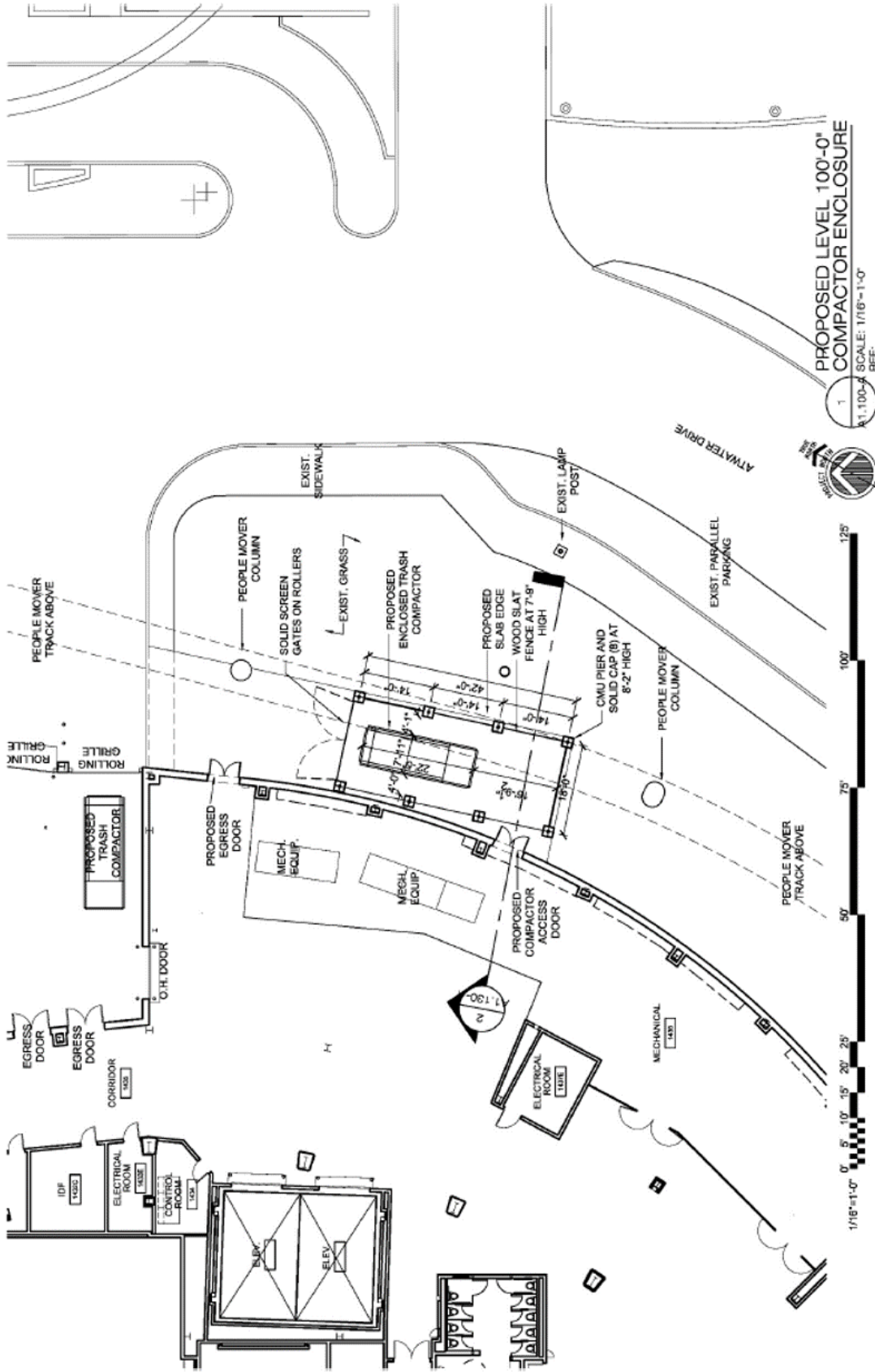
Proposed sign to be located above entrance facing Washington Boulevard (east)
Three signs proposed, one above each entrance



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



