

Downtown Code Design Review Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2021

Members Present: Lustig, Porter, Moore, Hastings, Dickson, Oldham, Mosley, Yearwood

Staff Present: Hammer, Williams, Yoo, Ventura, Dickerson (Legal)

Others Present: Tony Giarratana, Sam Reed, Morgan Stengel

Location: 800 2nd Avenue South, Development Services Center Conference Room

I. CASES FOR REVIEW

1) Dog Park Billboard Relocation

2021DTC-025-001

0 YMCA Way, 810 Church Street

Staff Reviewer: Eric Hammer

Staff Recommendation: Approve with conditions and defer without all conditions

APPLICANT REQUEST

The request is to modify the billboard standards for property located at 0 YMCA Way and 801 Church Street (0.52 acres), within the Core subdistrict of the DTC.

DTC MODIFICATION REQUEST SUMMARY

1. Signage Compliance - Billboards

- Required: No new billboards are allowed within the DTC boundaries
- Proposed: Replacement of two-doubled sided billboards with two single-sided digital billboards in different locations.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & PLAN DETAILS

The site at 0 YMCA Way currently is being utilized as a foundation for two double-sided billboards with a large superstructure base. One side faces north towards the viaduct that connects Union Street to 9th Avenue. The other side faces south towards the corner of YMCA Way and Church Street. This project proposes to remove these billboards and add two new billboards – a freestanding 392 SF billboard on the 0 YMCA Way site addressing the viaduct and a 195 SF wall-mounted billboard on a building currently under construction on Church Street.

The area reclaimed by removing the size of the billboard superstructure is proposed to be repurposed as a dog park, maintained by the adjacent property owner with public accessibility. The size of this privately-owned, publicly accessible dog park is 3,743 SF. The lot is configured in a triangular shape and the dog park space is surrounded by the retaining wall of the viaduct, the rear of the development currently under construction at 900 Church Street. Various passive and active amenities are proposed, as well as foliage.



Figure 1: View of current billboards at 0 YMCA Way



Figure 2: Proposed billboard at 0 YMCA Way Figure 3: Proposed billboard at 801 Church

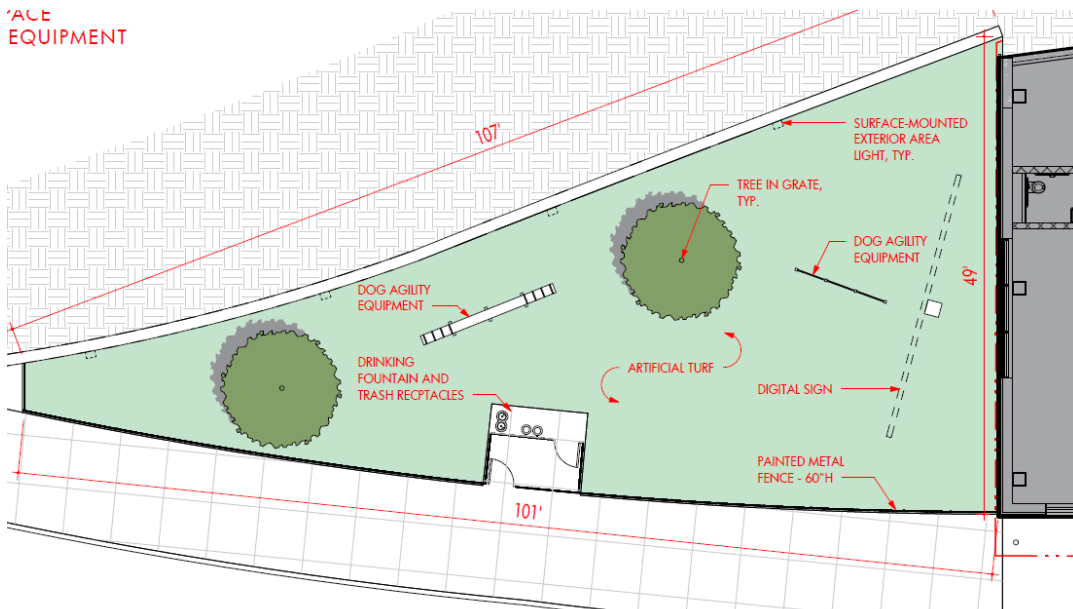


Figure 4: Proposed layout of publicly accessible dog park

ANALYSIS

Signage Compliance - Billboards

Billboards, also referred to as off-premises signage, are regulated by the DTC. The DTC specifies that no new billboards are allowed within the boundaries of the DTC zoning district. The purpose of this is to prohibit new sources of distracting visual clutter and commercial advertisements, and to gradually reduce the amount of off-site commercial advertisement over time as properties redevelop.

Understanding that the DTC differentiates between on-premises signage and billboards, the DTC also treats digital and static signage differently and places a higher burden on digital signage – regulating aspects of the signage like transitions between static images and lighting intensity. Digital signage and digital billboards can be disruptive if the operational components of the sign area are not regulated properly.

However, there are other considerations, including the protections afforded to billboards by state law which allow for movement, reconstruction, and sometimes significant expansion of billboards within a parcel. This proposal does not expand the billboard size, in fact it nearly halves the sign area. Significantly increased residential density is also anticipated in the vicinity within the next several years and this proposal returns a virtually unbuildable property to productive use as a community amenity.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

New billboards are generally inappropriate within DTC zoning when considered in a vacuum. However, staff recognizes that this proposal results in a net benefit for the immediate neighborhood by replacing four billboard faces with two much smaller billboards and creates a community amenity. Staff recommends approval of the requested modification with the following conditions and deferral without all conditions:

1. All unmodified standards of the DTC for signage shall apply to the proposed billboards, including but not limited to the spacing and image duration standards.
2. The developer shall propose an illuminance (footcandles) or luminance (nits) limit for the signage consistent with best practices for digital signage in an urban environment; staff shall review proposal.
3. The public access easement or agreement regulating the use and maintenance of the dog park shall be finalized prior to permit approval.
4. Both billboards shall count towards the total of allowed signage on their respective frontages.
5. The modification to allow digital technology shall be nullified if the billboards proposed are moved from the locations proposed within this application.

Hastings moved and Dickson seconded the motion to disapprove the modification request with two additional conditions (8-0-0):

6. A variation on the proposed billboard at 0 YMCA Way that integrates into the building design may be reviewed and approved by staff.
7. The dog park shall include signage that clearly indicates that the dog park is publicly accessible.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 1) Dog Park Billboard Relocation is approved. (8-0-0)

II) Adjournment