

Downtown Code Design Review Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020

Members Present: Kennedy, Dickson, Casella, Oldham, Hanan, Hastings, Mosley

Staff Present: Buechler, Hammer, Wallace, Williams, Cathey

Others Present: Ben York (MPW), Alex Dickerson (Legal); Joe Bucher, Doug Sloan, Charles Robert Bone, Kim Hawkins (Nashville Yards); Renick Moore (Sprocket Rocket)

Location: 800 2nd Avenue South, Metro Planning Dept. – Development Services Center Conference Room

I. APPROVAL OF THE 1/9/2020 DTC DRC MINUTES

Oldham moved and Mosley seconded the motion to approve the January 9th, 2020 meeting minutes (5-0).

II. CASES FOR REVIEW

1) Nashville Yards District Signage

2020DTC-005-001

913, 1010, & 1020 Church Street and 1000 & 1010 Broadway

Staff Reviewer: Eric Hammer

A request to modify various signage standards of the DTC.

Staff Recommendation: Approve with conditions or deferral without all conditions.

APPLICANT REQUEST

A request to modify various signage standards of the Downtown Code (DTC) for property located at 913, 1010, & 1020 Church Street and 1000 & 1010 Broadway (17 acres), east of 9th Avenue North, south of Commerce Street and within the Core and Upper Broadway Subdistricts of the DTC.

PROCESS

All signage modifications are deemed major modifications, requiring approval from the DTC Design Review Committee. This committee makes independent architectural and design decisions based on both the merits of the modifications requested and other factors, including the intent of the standards within the DTC. The DRC may approve or disapprove modifications based on their determination that the intent of the DTC is being met and results in better urban design.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Nashville Yards is generally bounded by Broadway to the south and CSX right-of-way to the west, consisting of approximately 17 acres of land stretching over 8 interrelated phases, with several towers containing various uses. The site is bound together by a series of integrated active pedestrian passageways, called "paseos", that wind through the length of the development.

Staff has worked extensively with the applicant to revise plans and further comply with the DTC. This resulted in the gradual reduction of proposed signage from 76,477 square feet to a currently proposed 41,277 square feet. Figure 1 shows the amount of signage proposed within the Nashville Yards site. Parcels 6 is not proposing signage and Parcel 7 is not included in this package.

Nashville Yards Wayfinding	1,600 square feet
Parcel 1: Grand Hyatt Hotel	2,616 square feet
Parcel 2: Residential / Retail	2,409 square feet
Parcel 3: Office / Retail	8,625 square feet
Parcels 4/5: Amazon Operations	8,734 square feet
Parcel 8: Residential / Retail	405 square feet
Parcel 9: AEG Complex	16,888 square feet
Total Proposed:	41,277 square feet

Figure 1: Proposed Signage

REQUEST SUMMARY

1. Building Sign Entitlements
 - o Required: Building signage entitlements are calculated at a rate of 2 square feet of sign area per 1 linear foot of building façade when no ground sign exists and 1 square feet of sign area per linear foot on façades not facing streets.
 - o Proposed: Building signage entitlements are established as proposed.
2. Skyline Signage Entitlements
 - o Required: Buildings in excess of 75 feet in height are permitted a skyline sign per each street frontage.
 - o Proposed: Buildings in excess of 75 feet are permitted skyline signs as proposed.
3. Digital Signage
 - o Required: Digital signage is allowed on wall signs or monument signs provided the changeable copy portion is no greater than 50% of the sign area.
 - o Proposed: Digital signage is allowed. The applicant is requesting 100% of the built sign area.
4. Monument Signage
 - o Required: Monument signs must not exceed 10 feet in height. Only a single monument sign is allowed per frontage unless property frontage exceeds 300 feet, then 2 are allowed. Monument signs must be 32 square feet or less.
 - o Proposed: Monument signs at various heights, sizes, and locations.

MODIFICATIONS

Building Sign Entitlements

All streets within the DTC, except for those properties within historic zoning overlays, are classified as either Pedestrian, Transitional, Gateway, Interstate, or Printer's Alley and these classifications are used to calculate entitlements for signs facing streets. This allows the signage standards to be more narrowly tailored to the context of a site. The DTC divides signage into three broad categories: skyline signs, ground signs, and building signs. Skyline sign entitlements are related to the height of a building and the number of street frontages. Building sign entitlements are calculated as a multiplier of the linear feet of a building façade. Facades facing streets have greater entitlements than those not facing streets.

In addition to activating façades that face streets, Nashville Yards activates the pedestrian paseo that flows through the site with pedestrian-only space lined with active uses. Figure 3 below shows this condition, with activated non-street facing façades shown in red and internal pedestrian flow shown in blue. Several non-street-facing façades within Nashville Yards feature two levels of activated space facing walkways or other pedestrian spaces, which essentially doubles the signage on a façade that is allocated half of the typical entitlement for façades facing streets.

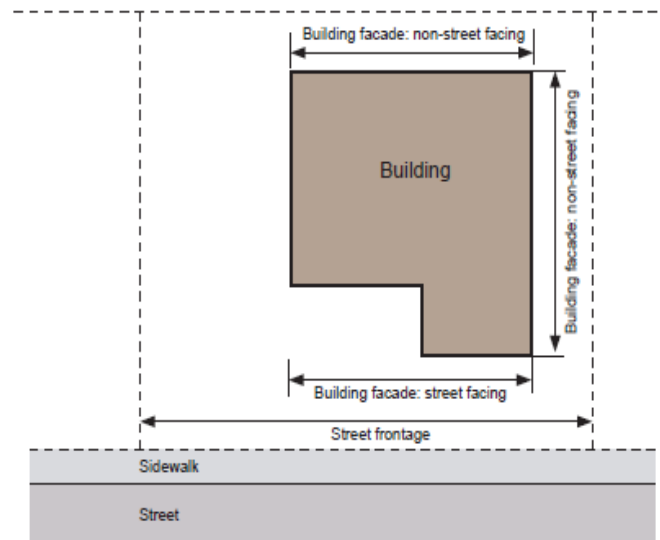


Figure 2: Sign Entitlement Diagram

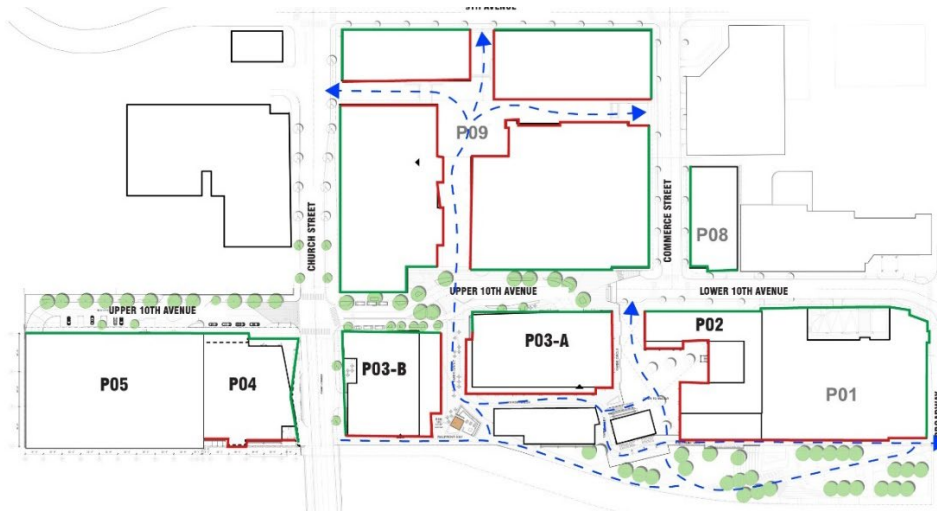


Figure 3: Street Facing and Non-Street Facing Activated Facades with Pedestrian Paths

Skyline Sign Entitlements

Within the DTC, skyline sign entitlements are allocated based on the height of a building and the number of street frontages. A building must be at least 75 feet in height to qualify for a skyline sign, with the maximum display area varying between 480 and 720 square feet depending on the height of the building. Based on current approved plans and the conceptual master plan, 10 towers within Nashville Yards qualify for some amount of skyline signage.



Figure 4: Locations and Orientation of Skyline Signage within Nashville Yards

The proposed sign package seeks to transfer the skyline signage entitlements from the entitled façades facing streets to more visible non-street facing façades particularly on the west side of the site along railroad right-of-way, as indicated on Figure 6. The package also proposes allowing the towers on Parcel 3a and 5, which only have frontage on 10th Avenue North, to have 2 skyline signs where each would typically only be allowed 1. The maximum area of individual skyline signs is determined by the height of the building. All parcels are compliant with the number of entitled skyline signs, except:

	Allowed	Proposed
Parcel 3a: Office / Retail	1	2
Parcel 5: Amazon Operations II	1	2

Overall, the site is entitled to 17 skyline signs and is proposing 16.

Digital Signage

Nashville Yards proposes use of digital signage on several façades. While any standard of the DTC can be modified, the DTC allows consideration of larger digital technology through use of the Modifications for Exceptional Design and Tourist-oriented Businesses sections.

In weighing the proposal’s merits, the DTC requires conformance with lighting standards and requires consideration of any impacts on residential or hotel uses. The site must have a fixed-seating capacity of 500 and offer activities or services to the general public of cultural, historical, recreational, educational, or

entertainment purposes. The DTC specifies design criteria that must be considered when judging the merits of digital signage, including architecture, the configuration or location of the building or property, building scale, legibility, technical competence, and quality in design, construction, and durability.

Parcel 9 features a theatre at the second floor and as a result has blank sections of the building where these signs could be integrated. Parcel 9 qualifies as a tourist-oriented business. Digital signs within Parcel 9 are proposed along internal pedestrian pathway, where they are integrated into façades.

On Parcel 5, there is a proposed digital sign on the north-facing façade.



Figure 5: Digital Signage on the Northwest Corner of Church Street and 10th Avenue North

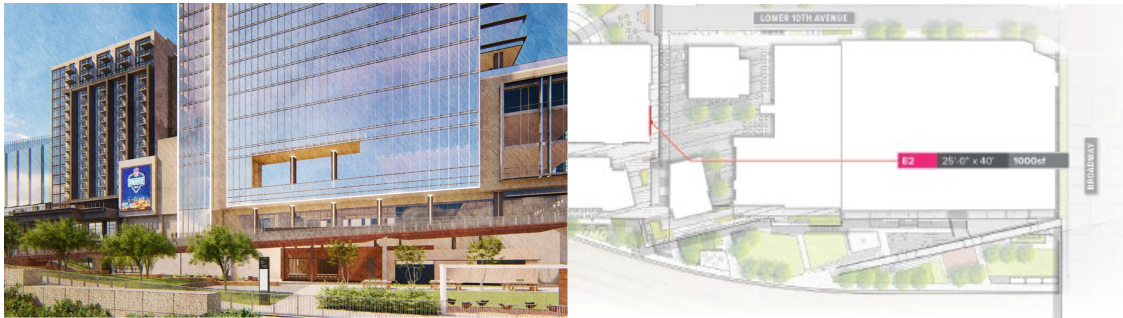


Figure 6: Digital Signage on Parcel 1 (left), Location of Digital Signage on Parcel 3 (right)

Digital signs on Parcel 1 and Parcel 3 face gathering spaces that are internal to the property. The sign on Parcel 1 faces the Nashville Yards open space and is integrated into the structure of the building. The digital sign is nearly 300 feet back from Broadway and is oriented towards the gathering space and not the street. The sign on Parcel 3, as shown in Figure 6, is internally focused and positioned above the heart of the pedestrian walkway system.

Monument Wayfinding Signage

Due to the size of the Nashville Yards site and the configuration of spaces, including pedestrian walkways and elevated private roadways, wayfinding signage is proposed for navigation purposes. This signage package proposes a range of wall-mounted and free-standing directional signage, which indicate parking areas, valet drop-off areas, and directional signage. Although some freestanding pedestrian-oriented directional signage is placed at critical entrances to the area, most of the signage is placed within internal pedestrian walkways or adjacent to the elevated private street of Upper 10th Avenue North. There are several urban kiosks that also display advertising, but these are all located internal to the site and in locations that will minimize disruption.



Figure 7: Wayfinding Sign Locations and Example Imagery

As described previously, the DTC allows monument signs and places several limitations on them. Along Transitional Streets, it limits the size of monument signs to 32 square feet and limits the height of the signs to 10 feet. One monument sign is permitted per one street frontage, unless the frontage exceeds 300 feet, in which case a second is allowed. Monument signs must be spaced a minimum of 200 feet apart when co-located along the same street frontage and a setback of 5 feet must be applied in certain cases.

In this case, this monument signage is not being proposed for specific business identification, but generalized wayfinding and environmental branding. Proposed signage along streets is oriented to pedestrians and is constructed with durable materials that reinforce the sense of place within the Nashville Yards site. The proposed signs range from approximately 4 feet to approximately 12 feet.



Figure 8: Pedestrian-oriented Wayfinding and Environmental Branding Signage

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The requested modifications meet the intent of the DTC given the context of adjacent streets and orientation of buildings. Staff recommends approval with the following conditions and deferral without the conditions:

1. Skyline signs affixed to the conceptual tower on Parcel 3a and both conceptual towers on the western portion of Parcel 9 shall conform to the sign area allowed for each building's final height.
2. Modifications approved to allow digital signage shall terminate if the subject sign is moved from the placement specified by this common sign package.
3. All other standards associated with the use of digital signs, including brightness and duration must be followed.

Hastings was recused from this item due to a conflict of interest. Hanan was not present for the beginning of the presentation and is not eligible to vote on this item. Oldham moved and Mosley seconded the motion to approve the modification request. (5-0-2)

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 1) Nashville Yards District Signage is approved. (5-0-2)

2) Sprocket Rocket Hub

2020DTC-005-001

535 Lafayette Street

Staff Reviewer: Justin Wallace

A request to modify active use and vehicular access standards of the DTC.

Staff Recommendation: Disapproval without all conditions or deferral with all conditions.

APPLICANT REQUEST

A request to modify various standards of the Downtown Code for property located at 535 Lafayette Street, (0.22 acres), at the corner of Lafayette Street and 6th Avenue South, and within the Lafayette Subdistrict of the DTC.

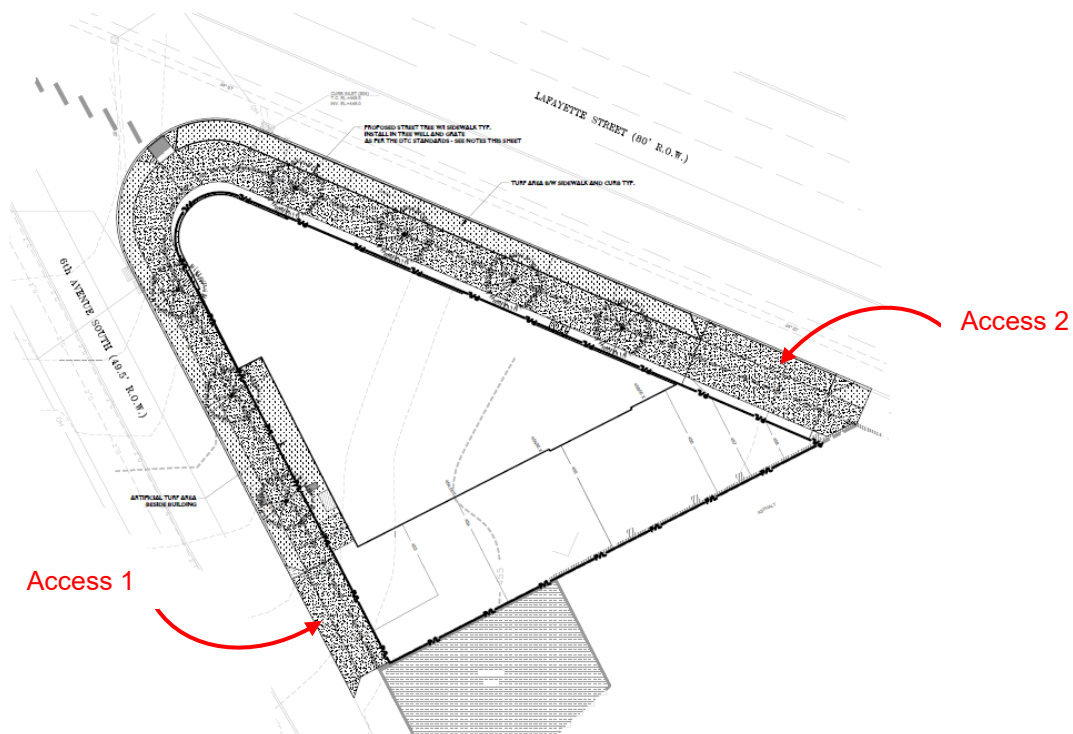
DTC MODIFICATION REQUEST SUMMARY

1. Active Use Definition

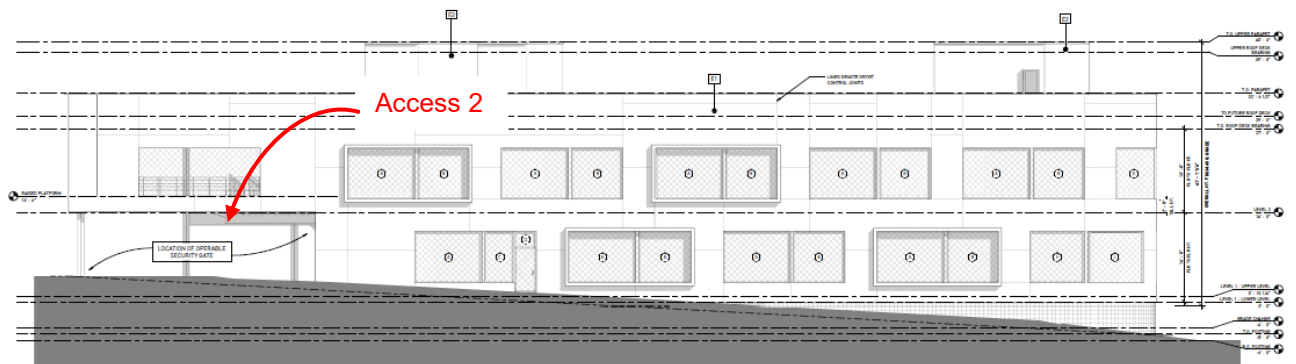
- Required: An active ground floor use requirement shall mean a habitable space occupied by retail, office, residential, institutional or recreational uses, specifically excluding parking and mechanical uses.
- Proposed: The applicant is requesting the DRC limit parking exclusion of active use to automobile parking.

2. Vehicular Access

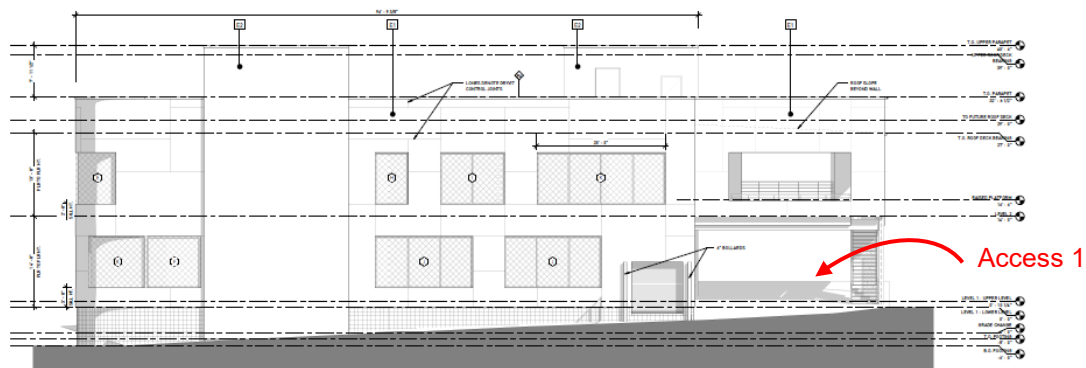
- Required: Access from public streets shall be considered in the following order: Other Streets, Secondary Streets, Neighborhood Streets, and then Primary Streets as approved by Metro departments. Lafayette Street is a primary street and 6th Avenue is a secondary street. Staff recommends access to occur from 6th Avenue, and not Lafayette Street. Reviewers shall consider the public safety, street character, and pedestrian experience.
- Proposed: Access points are proposed on 6th Avenue South and Lafayette Street.



Site Plan



Lafayette Street Elevation



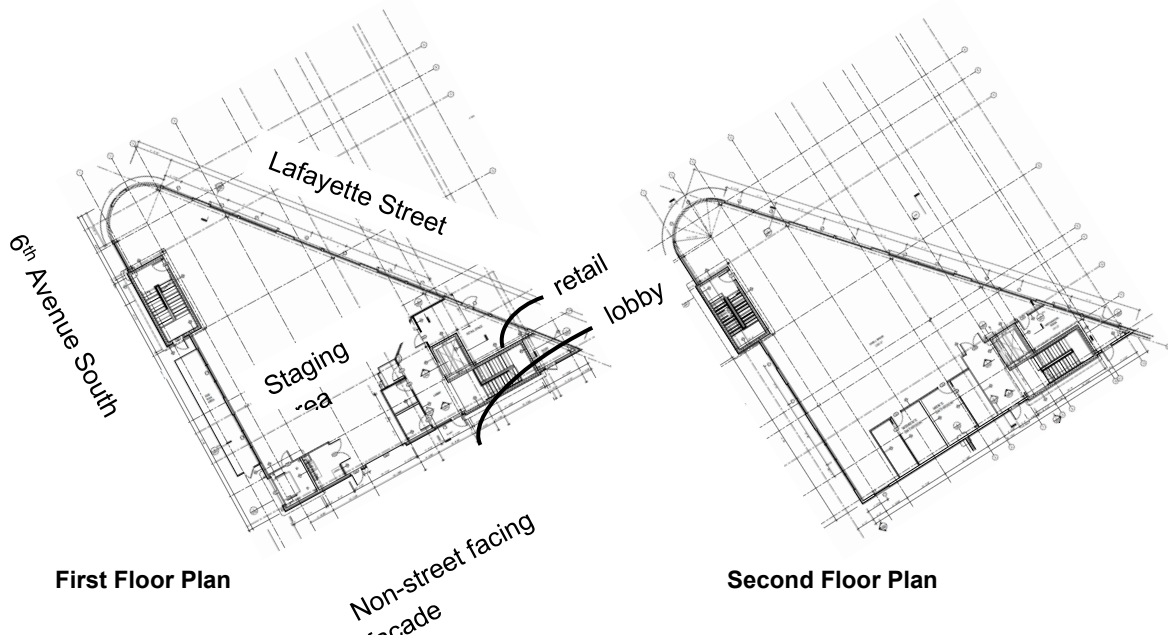
6th Avenue South Elevation

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project proposes a 2-story, 32-ft tall building to serve as Sprocket Rocket's business operations. The first floor consists of a staging area for pedal-powered vehicles. In this area, the vehicles will be used throughout the day by patrons, and parked, maintained, and serviced on when not in use. In addition to the staging area, there is a small check-in area and retail space for patrons. The second level serves as offices for the business and a large outdoor covered patio space that functions as a waiting area.

PLAN DETAILS

The property is located at the corner of 6th Avenue South and Lafayette Street. The site borders an adjacent property to the south. Pedestrian access is received from Lafayette Street and vehicular access points are indicated along 6th Avenue South and Lafayette Street.



First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

ANALYSIS

Active Use Definition

The Downtown Code requires an active ground floor use and defines active use as “a habitable space occupied by retail, office, residential, institutional or recreational uses, specifically excluding parking and mechanical uses (68).”

Non-Active Use

A ground floor active use is required of any project within the DTC and Planning staff has several concerns with the request to permit a non-active use. First, the proposed amount of non-active use is a significant portion of the building. The diagram below illustrates the area of frontage with a non-active use e.g. the parking, maintenance, storage, and rental of pedal vehicles. Approximately 70% of the frontage along Lafayette Street and 100% of the frontage along 6th Avenue South contain no active ground floor use.



First Floor Plan

Secondly, the applicant has not presented a unique condition or site constraint that warrants a modification at this time. Based on site-specific issues, an applicant may seek modifications to the Downtown Code and

any standard within the DTC may be modified, insofar as the intent of the standard is being met, the modification results in better urban design for the neighborhood as a whole, and the modification does not impeded or burden existing or future development of adjacent properties.

In the spirit of the Downtown Code to promote the notion of form over use, Planning staff finds it reasonable to consider a modification to allow a non-active use if the design of the building were to provide a public benefit or demonstrated a thoughtful and/or exceptional efforts to exceeds the goals and objectives of the DTC.

Planning staff has coordinated with the applicant to provide recommendations for a building design that considers the following:

- Frames the corner with a pedestrian-friendly presence by means of pedestrian entrance, window openings, or use of architectural features.
- Uses durable, high-quality finish materials.

Such design elements would strive to meet the following goals and objectives of the Downtown Code:

- Promote a walkable and attractive streetscape environment.
- Create a frontage condition that is comfortable, safe, and interesting for pedestrians.
- Ensure sustainability of buildings that can be adapted for new uses over time.

Until a design is submitted that demonstrates a thoughtful and/or exceptional effort to exceed the goals and objectives of DTC, Planning staff finds it unreasonable to recommend approval of the submitted plans at this time.

Vehicular Access

The DTC uses Street Types as an urban design and organizing tool to prioritize the location of vehicular access points. All streets are classified on the Regulating Plan as Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, Other, or Alley. Where alleys exist, or where new alleys can be created, the DTC prioritizes alleys for access and loading. The location of vehicular access from all other streets shall be determined on a case by case basis.

The map below illustrates the location of the site within the DTC street hierarchy. Lafayette Street is considered a Primary Street and 6th Avenue South is considered a Secondary Street.



Lafayette Subdistrict Street Hierarchy Map

Planning staff has coordinated with Public Works and the Multimodal Transportation Division and to determine optimal design solutions. The following design considerations factor into the recommendation.

Given the complicated and challenging condition of the intersection at Lafayette Street, 6th Avenue South, Ewing Avenue, and Lea Avenue, Public Works prefers access to occur on 6th Avenue South at the signalized intersection. The frequent turning of slow-moving vehicles onto Lafayette Street, which is a 6 lane state road, is not ideal and would presents a challenge for traffic flow.

The Downtown Code emphasizes the need to mitigate conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic by reducing the number of curb cuts where possible and encourages access points to not occur along primary streets (Lafayette).

Further, bike infrastructure should be accounted for in the proposed site layout. Walk-N-Bike Nashville calls for a minor protected bikeway to be planned along 6th Avenue South. Although several options may be available to accommodate such infrastructure, further coordination needs to occur to account for the bike lanes.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff maintains the definition of active use as defined by the Downtown Code. The project has not demonstrated efforts to align with the goals and objectives of the Downtown Code and requires further coordination and discussion to receive consideration of approval to allow a modification at this time.

Staff recommends disapproval without all conditions, and deferral with the following conditions in order to revisit with the DRC with anticipated changes:

1. Continue to work with Planning staff on a building design that considers the following:
 - Framing the corner intersection in a manner that is pedestrian-friendly by means of pedestrian entrance, window openings, or use of architectural features.
 - Using durable, high-quality finish materials, such as brick, brick veneer, fiber cement board, and metal panel systems.
2. Remove access point along Lafayette Street.
3. Sidewalk corridor shall be designed with street trees in tree grates versus a planting strip.

Hastings moved and Hanan seconded the motion to defer the modification request. (6-0)

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 2) Sprocket Rocket Hub is deferred. (6-0)

III) Adjournment