



Department of City Development  
City Plan Commission  
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee  
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump  
Commissioner  
Vanessa L. Koster  
Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Coggs  
6th Ald. District

**CITY PLAN COMMISSION  
ZONING REPORT**

**File No.** [231680](#)

**Location:** 507 W. North Avenue, on the south side of West North Avenue, west of Dr. William Finlayson Street

**Applicant/  
Owner:** Jkayla Hodges of Sign Effectz Inc on behalf of Bronzeville Center of the Arts, Inc. ("BCA")

**Current  
Zoning:** Local Business (LB2) within the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Development Incentive Zone ([DIZ](#))

**Proposed  
Zoning:** Approval of Type B sign within the DIZ

**Proposal:** This site is zoned Local Business, LB2, and is within the Bronzeville Cultural & Entertainment District Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) overlay, which was established by the Common Council in 2022. The overlay is intended to encourage development in Bronzeville that will support the growth of Bronzeville as a cultural and entertainment destination that highlights African American arts and culture. The overlay was created with significant engagement and input from the public and key stakeholders including the Historic King Drive BID #8 and Bronzeville Advisory Committee.

The DIZ regulates, among other things, a permitted use list and design standards, including signage. The DIZ incorporates the building wall signage standards from the Local Business, LB2, zoning district. If the proposed signage meets the standards of the DIZ, it is administratively approved. If the signage falls outside of those parameters, City Plan Commission approval is required in lieu of the Board of Zoning Appeals process that would occur absent the overlay.

Established in 2020, Bronzeville Center for the Arts, Inc. ("BCA") was created to highlight and celebrate African American art. BCA is near completion of its newly built facility, Gallery 507, an office and art gallery. The building signage proposed for the main (North Av.) façade includes one Type A sign and one Type B sign:



**Department of City Development**  
City Plan Commission  
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee  
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

**Lafayette L. Crump**  
Commissioner  
**Vanessa L. Koster**  
Deputy Commissioner

- The Type A building wall sign, which states the name of the building (Gallery 507), is 23 square feet and complies with the overlay standards.
- A Type B wall sign, which will be a banner sign used to promote events within the Bronzeville District, is not explicitly permitted by the DIZ overlay standards and therefore requires approval by CPC and is the subject of this application:
  - The sign constitutes a second sign within 25' lineal feet of building frontage. The zoning rules limit the quantity of signs that are approved without additional review to 1 per 25 feet of frontage as noted in Table 295-605-5 of the zoning code.
  - The sign exceeds the allowable square footage of 25 sf per Table 295- 605-5 of the zoning code. It is proposed to be 84 square feet.

**DIZ Overlay Principles  
And Standards:**

The DIZ's Signage Design Principles include:

- Signs in the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District should promote variety and creativity for individual building/user signage. (achieved)
- A useful way-finding and identity program should help further goals for the district. (achieved)
- Signs should allow for visibility for future businesses. (achieved)
- Signs should be architecturally compatible to the building and its surroundings. (achieved)
- Existing signs that do not comply with the standards for new signs may remain, however upon change shall move towards compliance. (not applicable)

The DIZ's Signage Standards include:

- Use of a Type B sign is limited.
- New Type B wall and projecting signs should have a similar appearance to Type A signs, per 295 407-2-b-2-c of the zoning code, with limited internal lighting. (achieved – sign will be illuminated by LED)
- A fully illuminated box sign, which is considered a Type B sign, is prohibited. (not applicable)



**Department of City Development**  
City Plan Commission  
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee  
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

**Lafayette L. Crump**  
Commissioner  
**Vanessa L. Koster**  
Deputy Commissioner

Per the applicant, the Type B banner is being proposed as shown in the exhibit to maximize opportunities to inform the public and passersby of Bronzeville Center for the Arts' Gallery 507 activities and program offerings. This banner sign will enhance and promote the spirit, purpose and intent of the district and is not contrary to the intent of the regulations of the district. The banner will help make this arts-focused building easily identifiable, assist with activating the street, and help bring visibility to this space.

The vertically oriented banner will be displayed on the main building façade, illuminated with wall mounted up-and-down lights. The sturdy permanent mounting system includes pole sleeves that run along the top and bottom of the banner. The banner will rotate occasionally, with an intended rotation every 90 days. The banner will not be used for off-premise advertising.

Staff has reviewed the proposed signage alongside the overlay goals, principles and standards, and has concluded that it is consistent with the overlay.

**Adjacent Land Use:**

Adjacent properties are zoned Local Business (LB2) and include a variety of commercial uses. There are single-family homes (zoned RT4) to the south of the site.

**Consistency with Area Plan:**

The proposed signage for Gallery 507 is located within the boundaries of the Northeast Side Area Plan, originally adopted in 2009, and the Equitable Growth Through Transit Oriented Development Plan for King Drive, adopted in 2018 as an amendment to the Northeast Side Area Plan. Both Plans identify this portion of North Avenue as the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District intended as a hub of African American art and culture. The development of Gallery 507 is a major step forward for the area and will elevate the identity of the Bronzeville district as a cultural destination.

The Development Incentive Zone Overlay standards were created in 2022 to ensure that new development advances the goals of the district. While overly large signs often detract from the appearance of buildings and commercial districts, the proposed signage is directly related to and reinforces the district's identity as a hub of arts and culture.

The Northeast Side Plan emphasizes the importance of fostering strong neighborhood identity, and recommends the use of banners that identify an area and promote community events as well as building design that promotes the



**Department of City Development**  
City Plan Commission  
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee  
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

**Lafayette L. Crump**  
Commissioner  
**Vanessa L. Koster**  
Deputy Commissioner

district's image as a cultural, arts and entertainment district. The proposed signage at Gallery 507 is consistent with the Northeast Side Area Plan.

**Previous City  
Plan Action:**

**11/7/2022** - [FN 220772](#) – City Plan Commission recommended approval of a substitute ordinance to establish a Development Incentive Zone known as the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District on land located generally on the north and south sides of West North Avenue, at and west of North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and east of Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District.

**8/23/2021** - [FN 210586](#) - City Plan Commission recommended approval of a substitute resolution creating a study plan for the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone, as established by Section 295-1005 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, for properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District

**8/23/2021** - [FN 210585](#) - City Plan Commission recommended approval of a substitute ordinance creating the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone, for properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District.

**Previous Common  
Council Action:**

**11/22/2022** - [FN 220772](#) – The Common Council approved a substitute ordinance to establish a Development Incentive Zone known as the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District on land located generally on the north and south sides of West North Avenue, at and west of North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and east of Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District.

**9/21/2021** - [FN 210586](#) - The Common Council approved a substitute resolution creating a study plan for the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone, as established by Section 295-1005 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, for properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District.

**9/21/2021** - [FN 210585](#) – The Common Council approved a substitute ordinance



**Department of City Development**  
City Plan Commission  
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee  
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

**Lafayette L. Crump**  
Commissioner

**Vanessa L. Koster**  
Deputy Commissioner

creating the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone, for properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District.

**7/27/2021** - [FN 210553](#) - The Common Council approved a substitute motion directing the Department of City Development to initiate a zoning map amendment to create a Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District Interim Study Overlay Zone for properties located along West North Avenue between North Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Interstate 43, in the 6th Aldermanic District.

**Recommendation:**

Since the proposed Type B sign is intended to help promote and provide visibility to an arts-centric use within the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District, and consists of a high quality design, façade mounting structure and aesthetic, staff recommends approval of the subject file.