

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division Report****Variance Request  
BZZ-2610****Date:** October 6, 2005**Applicant:** Signcrafters, on behalf of NBA City Restaurant**Address of Property:** 600 North 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue**Contact Person and Phone:** Michael Lawrence, (763) 571-2995**Planning Staff and Phone:** Shanna Sether, (612) 673-2307**Date Application Deemed Complete:** September 15, 2005**End of 60 Day Decision Period:** November 14, 2005**Appeal Period Expiration:** January 13, 2006**Ward:** 7      **Neighborhood Organization:** Downtown Mpls. Neighborhood Assn.**Existing Zoning:** B4C-2 Downtown Commercial District and DP Downtown Parking Overlay District**Proposed Use:** Installation of a new sign.**Proposed Variance:** A variance increase the maximum area of a projecting sign from 80 sqft. to 220.5 sqft. facing North 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and a variance to increase the maximum area of a projecting sign from 80 sqft. to 220.5 sqft. facing North 6<sup>th</sup> Street to a regional sports arena in the B4C-2 Downtown Commercial District and DP Downtown Parking Overlay District.**Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance:** 525.520 (21)**Background:** The subject site is the Target Center, 600 North 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, in the B4C-2 Downtown Commercial District and DP Downtown Parking Overlay District. NBA City Restaurant has recently moved in to the Target Center and has proposed installation of new signage on the corner of the building. Signs accessory to regional sports arenas, per 543.170, are regulated by sign standards for the Downtown Entertainment Area and are allowed a maximum of 80 sqft. of sign area per projecting sign. The subject sign advertises NBA City Restaurant and measures 441 sq. ft. in total and is 20 ft. from the ground at the top of the sign. The proposed sign would be located on a corner of two primary building walls found at the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and 6<sup>th</sup> Street North. The area of the sign face on the primary building wall along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North is 220.5 sqft and the area of the sign face on the primary building wall along 6<sup>th</sup> Street North is 220.5 sqft; the maximum area per projecting sign allowed is 80 sqft. In addition to the variance application, the applicant is proposing to install a series of projecting signs, with 3 basketballs flashing downward. The 3 basketball projecting signs are compliant with the

zoning code per the Downtown Entertainment Area, Table 534-3, Specific Standards for Signs in the Downtown Districts.

**Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:**

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed by the official controls and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

**Maximum area for a projecting sign:** The maximum area per projecting sign in the Downtown Entertainment Area is 80 sq. ft. The subject sign is 441 sq. ft. in total. The area of the sign face on the primary building wall along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North is 220.5 sqft and the area of the sign face on the primary building wall along 6<sup>th</sup> Street North is 220.5 sqft. The maximum area allowed, as right for total signage, is calculated at 3496 sqft. facing 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and 2560 sqft. on 6<sup>th</sup> Street North. The proposed signage will only be 25% of what is allowed for total signage and would create undue hardship based on the scale of the building. The applicant has also indicated that the proposed sign was designed to be in scale with the existing building.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

**Maximum area for a projecting sign:** The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land and have not been created by the applicant. The applicant is proposing signage that is far less than the total amount of signage allowed in the Downtown Entertainment Area. The applicant has indicated that the shape of the sign was designed to enhance the Downtown Entertainment District and the spirit of First Avenue.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

**Maximum area for a projecting sign:** Staff does not believe that the proposed sign will alter the essential character of the neighborhood due to the proximity to the Downtown Entertainment Area and the Block E development. In addition, the placement of the sign should have minimal effect on the adjacent properties due to the height and location of the sign.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

**Maximum area for a projecting sign:** Granting the variance would likely have no impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the proposed structure be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.

**Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for a sign adjustment:**

- 1. The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.**

**Maximum size for a projecting sign:** Staff does not believe that the proposed will lead to sign clutter as the scale of the building is so large in comparison to the amount of signage being proposed. The applicant has stated that the proposed signage will become an identifier for the intersection and another landmark sign in Minneapolis, similar to the Gold Medal Flour and Pillsbury signs.

- 2. The sign adjustment will allow a sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or that is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.**

**Maximum size for a wall sign:** The proposed sign is unique and interesting and can enhance the surrounding area. The proposed signage will be internally lit and flash from the top three basketballs into the hoop on the proposed sign, closest to grade. The Target Center is most notably associated with the NBA and this particular signage will more than likely identify this relationship.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the findings above and **approve** the variance to increase the maximum area of a projecting sign from 80sqft. to 220.5 sqft. facing North 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and to **approve** the variance to increase the maximum area per projecting sign from 80 sq. ft to 220.5 sqft. facing North 6<sup>th</sup> Street for a regional sports arena located at 600 North 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue in the B4C-2 Downtown Commercial District and DP Downtown Parking Overlay District.