

ARTICLE 13

SIGNS

Section 13.01 Purpose.

The primary function of signage, as it relates to this Ordinance, is to identify a particular use or business occupying a zoning lot or building in the City. The City further finds that reasonable use of signage promotes commerce, and that failure to regulate the size, location, and construction of signs in the City may adversely impact the promotion of commerce, lead to poor identification of businesses, and contribute to deterioration of the City's business districts and neighborhoods.

Unrestricted signage does not benefit individual businesses or property owners, or the community as a whole, because a proliferation of signs in the City would unduly distract motorists and pedestrians: create traffic hazards: restrict light and air: harm the City's appearance: contribute to blighting: negatively impact property values; and reduce the effectiveness of signs needed to direct and warn the public. Reasonable regulation of signs is necessary to minimize hazards and distractions for motorists and pedestrians, and to preserve the City's character and appearance.

The provisions of this Article shall be considered to be the minimum necessary to promote and protect the public health, safety, comfort, morals, and convenience. The further purposes of this Article are to:

1. Encourage free expression of ideas and dissemination of messages, regardless of content, using signs that are compatible with their surroundings and legible under the circumstances in which they are designed to be seen.
2. Regulate the construction, alteration, repair, and maintenance of all signs with respect to safety, location, sign type, dimensions, height, and method of illumination.
3. Prohibit signs and the proliferation of visual clutter that would confuse, distract or mislead motorists; endanger the public health or safety; obstruct vision; or potentially harm business opportunities or community appearance.
4. Protect public and private investment in buildings, businesses, and land; and prevent the placement of signs that would conceal or obscure traffic control devices, official markers or signs advertising adjacent uses.
5. Protect the general public from damage and injury caused by distractions, hazards or obstructions caused by poorly designed or improperly constructed signage.
6. Preserve the appearance of the City by preventing the placement of oversized signs that are out of scale with surrounding buildings and uses.
7. Seek the removal of unlawful and abandoned signs, and encourage the replacement or removal of nonconforming signs that are incompatible with the purpose of this Article.

Section 13.02 General Standards.

The following general standards shall apply to signs in all zoning districts:

A. Standards of Measurement.

Dimensional standards and measurements for signs shall be subject to the following (see illustration):

1. **Sign area.** The surface area of a sign shall be measured and defined by the area of a rectangular or circular figure that encloses the extreme limits of individual letters, words, symbols or message of the sign together with any frame.
 - a. Where two (2) sign faces with identical sign areas are placed back to back within two (2) feet of one another, then the sign area shall equal the area of one (1) face.
 - b. Where two (2) sign faces with different sign areas are placed back to back within two (2) feet of one another, then the sign area shall equal the area of the larger face.
 - c. Where two (2) or more sign faces are placed more than two (2) feet from one another at any point, then the sign area shall equal the total area of all sign faces.
2. **Sign height.** The distance from the average level of the ground or pavement directly below the sign to the highest point of the sign structure, including any supportive or decorative elements (see illustration).
3. **Sign setback.** Setbacks shall be measured from the closest street right-of-way or front lot line to the nearest edge of the sign.
4. **Signable area.** The signable area of a building shall equal the area of the building's street level façade (see illustration).
 - a. **Multiple uses.** Where more than one business or use occupies space on the street level façade, the total signable area allowed for the building shall be divided among the businesses or uses in proportion to the size of each occupied space.
 - b. **Corner lots.** Where a building has two (2) or more street level facades (such as on a corner lot), the signable area shall equal the area of the largest street level façade.

B. Construction and Maintenance.

All signs shall be constructed or installed in compliance with the State Construction Code, and other applicable building, fire, and electrical codes enforced by the City; shall be maintained in good repair and working order; and shall present a neat and orderly appearance. Non-galvanized or corrosion-prone materials shall be painted as necessary to prevent corrosion.

All sign faces shall be smooth, and no nails, tacks or wires shall be permitted to protrude from any sign. This shall not exclude the use of block letters, decorative elements or other devices that may extend over the top or in front of the sign structure.

C. Placement Requirements.

1. No sign may extend above any parapet or be placed upon any roof surface. For purposes of this Article, roof surfaces constructed at an angle of 75 degrees or more from horizontal (such as mansard roofs) shall be regarded as wall space.
2. No sign attached to a building, other than a permitted awning or projecting sign, may project more than one (1) foot from the building wall.
3. Signs shall not be located within nor extend over any street right-of-way or corner clearance area, except where specifically authorized by this Article. This restriction shall include any future planned rights-of-way identified in the master transportation plans for the City, county or state road authorities.

D. Hazards and Obstructions.

Signs shall not be designed or maintained in a manner that would confuse or mislead motorists or pedestrians, create traffic or pedestrian hazards, obstruct free and clear vision or interfere with any traffic control device. No sign shall be erected or maintained so as to prevent ingress or egress from any door, window or fire escape. No sign of any kind shall be attached to a standpipe, fire escape or other means of ingress or egress.

All signs shall be located at least ten (10) feet from any utility pole, overhead wire, transformer or streetlight. The Building Official may waive this requirement upon determination that no good purpose would be served by the required setback.

E. Use.

Signs shall not impair the use of adjacent properties. All signs shall be accessory to the principal use of the lot where the sign is located, unless specifically permitted by this Article as a non-accessory sign. Any sign permitted by this Article may contain a non-commercial message. A changeable copy area shall be allowed as part of a permitted sign, provided that the changeable copy area shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total sign area. Text and images within a changeable copy sign shall be static and not cycle more frequently than once every six (6) seconds. Animated Copy (flashing, moving, or revolving text and images) is prohibited due to public safety concerns.

F. Illumination.

Internal and external sign illumination shall be permitted, subject to the standards of Article 14 (Exterior Lighting) and the following (see illustrations):

1. **External sign illumination.** External illumination of signs shall be permitted in any zoning district, provided that the light source(s) shall be fully-shielded, directed towards the sign face, and designed to concentrate all light on the sign copy area.

2. **Internal sign illumination.** Signs accessory to non-residential uses in any zoning district may be internally illuminated, provided that the sign faces are more than fifty percent (50%) covered by semi-opaque colors and materials with a color value and saturation of fifty percent (50%) or higher (see illustration). Internal illumination of signs accessory to residential uses shall be prohibited.
3. **Hours of illumination.** Illuminated signs shall be equipped with a functional timer control. Such signs shall not be illuminated after 11:00 p.m., or one-half (½) hour following the close of the business day, whichever is later.

Such signs shall not be illuminated before sunrise, or one-half (½) hour prior to the beginning of the business day, whichever is earlier.

4. **Other Limitations.** Sign illumination shall be further limited as follows:
 - a. Sign illumination shall be provided solely by electrical means or devices, and shall not be of a flashing, intermittent, moving or animated type.
 - b. Luminous tube lighting (neon, fluorescent or similar) shall not be directly visible from any street right-of-way or adjacent lot. Such lighting may be used as an indirect light source, or if shielded by translucent panels or similar methods.
 - c. Illumination of temporary signs shall be prohibited.

Section 13.03 Signs Allowed Without a Permit.

The following non-illuminated signs are exempt from Section 13.09 (Sign Permit) requirements, and shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district:

A. Temporary Non-Commercial Signs.

For the purpose of this Section, signs posted by or at the direction of a property owner or their agent for the purpose of marketing property for sale or lease shall be considered to be temporary non-commercial signs. Temporary signs displaying a non-commercial message shall be subject to the following:

1. The maximum permitted height and total sign area for temporary non-commercial signs on a zoning lot shall not exceed the following:

ZONING DISTRICT		MAXIMUM SIGN AREA FOR ALL SIGNS	MAXIMUM SIGN HEIGHT
Single-Family Residential, Two-Family Residential, and Manufactured Housing Park Districts	R-1, R-2, R-3, R-T, R-4	21 square feet	6 feet
Multiple-Family Residential, Office, Business, Industrial, and Parking Districts	RM-1, O, B-1, B-2, B-3, I-1, I-2, P	24 square feet	6 feet

2. Such signs shall be removed by the property or business owner, agent or person responsible for creating or placing the sign on the lot within five (5) calendar days following completion or discontinuation of the event, action or activity to which the sign pertains.
3. Such signs shall not be located within or over any street right-of-way, except as authorized by the City Council.
4. Such signs determined by the Building Official to be in a torn, damaged or unsafe condition shall be immediately removed by the owner, agent or person responsible for creating or placing the sign on the lot.
5. Such signs shall be prohibited accessory to a home occupation.

B. Address Numbers and Nameplate.

All principal buildings shall display their assigned street number in a manner legible from the street right-of-way. Address numbers may be illuminated in accordance with the standards of Section 13.02F (Illumination). In addition, one (1) non-illuminated nameplate shall be permitted per principal building to provide for the further identification of the building, use or occupants. The nameplate shall not exceed two (2) square-feet in area, and shall be attached flat against the building wall.

C. Portable Signs

A maximum of one (1) portable sign shall be permitted accessory to a principal non-residential use in the B-1 (Local Business), B-2 (Downtown Business), and B-3 (General Business) Districts, subject to the following:

1. Portable signs shall not exceed five (5) feet in height, three (3) feet in width, and 15 square feet in sign area.
2. Portable signs shall be permitted to be displayed during regular business hours for the use, plus one-half (½) hour prior to the beginning of the business day and one-half (½) hour following the close of the business day.
3. Portable signs shall be located immediately adjacent to a public entrance for the use to which the sign is accessory, in a manner that minimizes interference with vehicular or pedestrian traffic flow and visibility. Such signs may be located on the public sidewalk within the street right-of-way, subject to City Planner approval of the location.
4. Portable signs shall be constructed of plastic, metal or similar weather-resistant materials, and shall be maintained in a neat and orderly condition. Use of plywood, cardboard or paper shall be prohibited.

D. Other Signs and Sign-Related Activities.

The following types of signs and sign-related activities shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district:

1. Painting, servicing, cleaning or minor repairs to an existing sign, provided that the sign is restored to its original design and all work is in compliance with applicable structural and electrical codes, and the requirements for such signs specified in this Article.
2. One (1) window sign accessory to a permitted non-residential use, which shall not exceed two (2) square-feet in area and may be illuminated.
3. Memorial signs, tablets or markers cut into any masonry surface or constructed of bronze or other incombustible material.
4. Flags bearing the official design of a nation, state, municipality, educational institution, award or non-profit organization, including pennants installed by the City on or over public streets for aesthetic or promotional purposes.
5. Signs of a duly constituted governmental body; signs required to be maintained by law or governmental order, rule or regulation; signs identifying public access, municipal facilities and similar official markers; and incidental signs displayed for the direction, safety or convenience of the public.
6. Traffic safety and control signs that conform to the requirements of the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
7. Changes to sign copy within an approved changeable copy area.
8. Posting of not more than one (1) “No Trespassing” sign or similar notice per side of a lot with frontage on a public street, provided that each sign is no more than two (2) square-feet in area and located entirely upon private property.
9. Incidental signs carried by or affixed to clothing worn by persons; and incidental signs on vehicles, trailers, portable liquid propane tanks, and similar transitory devices that are associated with and regularly used in the course of conducting the principal use located on the premises.

Section 13.04 Signs Allowed With a Permit.

The following signs shall be permitted accessory to a permitted use in any zoning district, subject to approval of a sign permit in accordance with Section 13.09 (Sign Permit) requirements:

A. Site Entry Features with Signage.

Site entry features with signage may be erected at the entrance to a residential subdivision, multiple-family residential development, elderly or senior housing development, manufactured housing park, or office, research or industrial park, subject to the following (see illustration):

1. **Number of signs.** Maximum of one (1) sign on each side of the entrance from a public street classified as a collector, arterial or thoroughfare by the master transportation plans for the City, county or state road authorities.
2. **Setbacks.** Site entry features with signage shall be located outside of any street right-of-way or corner clearance area, and shall further comply with the following minimum setback requirements:

- a. Ten (10) feet from any street right-of-way or curblin of any internal access driveway.
- b. Five (5) feet from any sidewalk or paved path.
3. **Sign area and height.** The maximum height for signs on a site entry feature shall not exceed six (6) feet, and the maximum sign area shall not exceed 24 square feet.
4. **Illumination.** Illumination of such signs shall be limited to external light sources.
5. **Planning Commission review.** The location and design of each site entry feature with signage shall be subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission.

B. Building Directory.

Where a single building on a single lot is occupied by more than one (1) business, dwelling or other use above the street level façade (such as a multiple-story office or commercial building), a building directory sign may be erected on the street level façade for these uses, subject to the following (see illustration):

1. The building directory shall be separate from any permitted signs accessory to the uses occupying the street level façade.
2. The maximum sign area shall not exceed three percent (3%) of the signable area of the building.
3. Illumination of such signs shall be limited to external light sources.

C. Construction Signs.

Temporary construction signs shall be subject to the following:

1. **Number of signs.** Maximum of one (1) sign per street frontage of the zoning lot.
2. **Sign area, height and location.** The maximum sign area shall not exceed 24 square-feet, and the maximum sign height shall not exceed six (6) feet. Construction signs shall be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from any street right-of-way.
3. **Display period.** The sign shall not be erected prior to approval of a site plan, final preliminary plat or equivalent City action, and shall be removed within five (5) calendar days of completion of the project's final phase, or upon expiration of site plan or permit approval.

D. Other Temporary Signs.

Temporary signs not otherwise regulated by this Section or Section 13.03 (Signs Allowed Without a Permit) (including balloon signs, festoons, banners, and similar temporary signs) shall be subject to the following:

1. The total sign area for such signs per zoning lot shall not exceed 32 square feet, except that temporary windows signs may cover up to one hundred percent (100%) of the window area.

2. Such temporary signs not mounted flat against a building wall or window shall be set back a minimum of five (5) feet from all street rights-of-way.
3. Such signs shall not exceed the height of the principal building on the lot or the maximum permitted height in the zoning district, whichever is less.
4. Such signs shall be permitted for a maximum of 60 display days per calendar year.
5. The location of temporary signs affixed within or over street rights-of-way shall be subject to City Council approval.
6. A removal agreement or security bond may be required by the City to guarantee removal of such signs.

Section 13.05 Building-Mounted Signs.

The intent of this Section is to establish consistent and reasonable standards for the location, size and range of permitted types of signs located on buildings in the City, and to minimize the proliferation of excessive or out-of-scale building signage that would compete for the attention of motorists, or create traffic hazards or visual blight within the City.

The following shall apply to all building-mounted signs accessory to non-residential uses in any zoning district [signs associated with residential uses are subject to the standards of Section 13.04 (Signs Allowed with a Permit)]:

A. Building-Mounted Sign Standards.

TABLE 16-1	TYPE OF PERMITTED SIGNS			
	WALL	AWNING	PROJECTING	WINDOW
Permit required?	yes	yes	yes	no
Internal or external illumination permitted?	yes	external only	yes	no
Maximum number of sign faces per sign	1	1	2	1
Minimum sign height above ground (feet)	none	7.5 feet	8.0 feet	none
Maximum permitted sign area of all signs(square feet)	10% of the signable area of the building space occupied by the use.			15% of the street level window surface area.

1. **Location.** All building-mounted signs shall be located entirely within the street level façade(s).
2. **Rear public entrance sign.** One (1) additional building-mounted sign not exceeding four (4) square feet in area shall be permitted at any rear public entrance, which shall not count toward the maximum sign area permitted under this Section.

3. **Awning signs.** Awning signs shall be further subject to the following (see illustration):
 - a. Such signs shall be restricted to the awning valance, a band of material hanging from the bottom edge of the awning.
 - b. Such signs shall not exceed eight (8) inches in height, and shall occupy a maximum of thirty-three percent (33%) of the valance area.
 - c. Signs proposed to project or overhang into a public right-of-way shall be subject to City Council approval. Encroachment agreements may also be required from state or county road authorities with jurisdiction over the street right-of-way.

4. **Projecting signs.** Projecting signs shall be further subject to the following (see illustration):
 - a. Such signs shall be secured to the building by metal anchors, bolts, supports, rods or braces, and shall be pinned away from the wall at least six (6) inches.
 - b. Such signs shall project from the wall at an angle of 90 degrees.
 - c. A maximum of one (1) projecting sign shall be permitted per use, with a maximum sign area of 20 square feet per sign face.
 - d. Projecting signs proposed to project or overhang into a public right-of-way shall be subject to City Council approval. Encroachment agreements may also be required from state or county road authorities with jurisdiction over the street right-of-way.

5. **Painted wall signs.** Signs applied with paint or similar substance on an exterior surface of a structure shall be considered a building-mounted sign subject to the standards of this Section. Painted wall signs shall be subject to Planning Commission approval. The Planning Commission shall permit the installation or alteration of a painted wall sign, upon determination that the sign will conform with the following:
 - a. Prior to painting a sign on a wall, the wall surface shall be freshly painted with a continuous base color.
 - b. The appearance, color, texture, and materials used shall be compatible with adjacent structures and uses, and the purpose of the zoning district.
 - c. The sign conforms to the standards of this Section and Section 13.02 (General Standards).

B. Building-Mounted Sign in the B-1 and B-2 Districts.

Sign projections into the street right-of-way or over a public sidewalk in the B-1 and B-2 Districts shall be permitted, subject to the following:

1. Wall signs in the B-1 and B-2 Districts may extend a maximum of one (1) foot.

2. Projecting signs may extend out from the building wall a maximum of four (4) feet or thirty-three percent (33%) of the sidewalk width, whichever is less.
3. Awning signs may extend out from the building wall a maximum of eight (8) feet or seventy five percent (75%) of the sidewalk width, whichever is less.

Section 13.06 Ground Signs.

The intent of this Section is to establish consistent and reasonable standards for the height, location and size of ground signs in the City, and to minimize the proliferation of excessive or out-of-scale ground signage that would compete for the attention of motorists, or create traffic hazards or visual blight within the City.

The following shall apply to all ground signs accessory to non-residential uses in any zoning district [signs associated with residential uses are subject to the standards of Section 13.04 (Signs Allowed with a Permit)]:

A. Ground Sign Standards.

MAXIMUM GROUND SIGN HEIGHT	MINIMUM SIGN SETBACK FROM BUILDINGS AND STREET RIGHTS-OF-WAY	MAXIMUM SIGN AREA PER SIGN FACE	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GROUND SIGNS PER ZONING LOT
10 feet	equal to actual sign height	40 square feet	1

1. No person shall erect, alter or relocate a ground sign, including any changes in sign copy, without first obtaining appropriate permits from the City.
2. Ground signs shall be prohibited within corner clearance areas, as defined in Section 5.304 (Corner Clearance Areas).
3. A maximum of two (2) sign faces shall be permitted per ground sign.

B. Permitted Modifications.

The following modifications to the standards of this Section have been established to:

1. Preserve the neighborhood character and appearance of the City’s lower density residential districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-T, and R-4) through more restrictive signage standards for permitted non-residential uses in these districts.
2. Ensure that permitted signage is in reasonable proportion to the land use intensity, and address the specific signage needs of multi-tenant shopping centers, large land uses, and uses that abut roads with expansive rights-of-way.
3. Distinguish between more intensive business and industrial districts and the Office (O) and Local Business (B-1) Districts, which act as a transitional buffer zones for abutting residential districts.

Modifiers shall be cumulative down each column of the following table, as applied to a particular land use or zoning lot:

	MAXIMUM SIGN HEIGHT	MINIMUM SIGN SETBACK	MAXIMUM SIGN AREA PER SIGN FACE	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SIGNS
PERMITTED MODIFIERS	10 feet	equal to actual sign height	40 square feet	1
Sign located in the R-1, R-2, R-3, R-T or R-4 District	- 2 feet	no change	- 12 square feet	no change
Sign located in the Office (OS-1) or Local Business (B-1) District	- 2 feet	no change	- 8 square feet	no change
Total lot frontage = > 500 feet or more of on one (1) street right-of-way, or > 700 feet or more on two (2) or more street rights-of-way.	no change	no change	+ 20 square feet	+ 1 additional sign
Sign abuts a street right-of-way width of 120 feet or more.	+ 2 feet	no change	+ 20 square feet	no change
Lot is occupied by three (3) or more separate non-residential uses (i.e. shopping center, office building, etc.)	no change	no change	+ 20 square feet	no change
TOTAL PERMITTED WITH MODIFIERS:	_____ feet	_____ feet	_____ square feet	_____ sign(s)

.....Cumulative Modifiers.....

Section 13.07 Billboards.

A. Findings.

The City has made the following determinations related to billboard signs:

1. The placement of billboard signs on lots or buildings in the City would result in visual pollution and obstructions of light and air for adjoining lots and uses.
2. Billboard signs are not appropriate in areas zoned for residential uses, or in adjoining Office (O) or Local Business (B-1) Districts that serve as a transitional zone for the residential districts, because of the intense commercial nature of the advertising activity, which would be harmful to residential property values and incompatible with the quality of life in residential areas.
3. Billboard signs are not appropriate in the B-2 (Central Business) District, because such signs would be out-of-scale with the pedestrian-oriented character of the downtown area, incompatible with the historic character of downtown buildings, and harmful to the promotion of commerce in the District.

4. Billboard signs are not appropriate in areas along Main Street (M-19), Gratiot Ave., 32 Mile Road, and other arterial streets and thoroughfares in the City, because a proliferation of billboard signs would create additional visual clutter and compete for the visual attention of motorists. These road corridors have been developed with multiple existing curb cuts, driveways and intersections; and numerous businesses that experience a high volume of employee, customer, and client traffic. Location of billboard signs in these areas would create or exacerbate visual diversions and hazards for motorists and pedestrians.
5. The placement of new billboard signs in the City is contrary to the purpose of this Article, and the goals and objectives of the City's Master Plan.

B. Billboards Prohibited.

In accordance with the above findings, billboard signs are hereby prohibited within the City of Richmond.

C. Existing Billboards.

Billboard signs lawfully existing in the City on the date of adoption of this Ordinance shall be permitted to continue, subject to the provisions of Section 13.10 (Nonconforming Signs). The City Planner shall be responsible for maintaining an inventory of the location and condition of all existing billboard signs in the City.

Section 13.08 Prohibited Signs.

The following types of signs are prohibited in all districts:

1. Signs that resemble and could be confused with an official highway, traffic or government sign, signal or traffic control device; or that obscure a sign, signal or traffic control device displayed by public authority to provide traffic instruction, direction or public information.
2. Signs painted on or attached to trees, utility poles, streetlights, fences or similar locations.
3. Signs placed upon or across any public right-of-way or upon any City property, except as expressly authorized by this Article or the City Council.
4. Signs that incorporate string lights; flashing, moving or intermittent lights of changing degrees or intensity; exposed incandescent bulbs; animation; or unshielded luminous tube lighting.
5. Exterior string lights accessory to a non-residential use, other than holiday decoration or when used as an embellishment to landscape plant materials.
6. Signs that have any visible moving parts, mechanical movement, rotation, or other apparent visible movement achieved by electrical or mechanical means or by action of normal wind currents; and signs that discharge any audible sound, odor or visible matter.

7. Roof signs, and signs that obstruct window or door openings, inhibit ingress or egress, or interfere with building ventilation.
8. Signs displayed without required permits or outside of permitted size, location or time period limitations.
9. Non-accessory and off-premises signs, including billboard signs per Section 13.07 (Billboards), except as otherwise provided for in this Article.
10. Abandoned or unlawful signs, displays of obscene material on any sign, and any other sign not expressly permitted by this Article.

Section 13.09 Sign Permit

It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, alter, or relocate any sign, sign structure or sign area subject to permit approval under the provisions of this Article, without first obtaining appropriate permit(s) from the City and paying the required permit fee according to the schedule of fees established by the City Council.

A. Required Information.

The following shall be provided with any permit application:

1. **Application information.** Permit applications shall include the following information:
 - a. The name, address and telephone numbers for the applicant, property owner, and sign contractor; street address or property location where the sign is to be located; and written consent of the property or sign owner to perform the proposed work.
 - b. Where a proposed sign would encroach into the county or state road right-of-way, copies of permits or approvals from the county road authority or Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) shall be provided.
 - c. Any other information required by the City Planner or Building Official to show full compliance with this Ordinance, and other codes and ordinances enforced by the City.
2. **Plot plan.** A plot plan shall include a parcel survey, easements, dimensions, locations of all structures, and all existing and proposed signs on the zoning lot. If building-mounted signs are proposed, elevation drawings of all buildings on the site shall be provided showing all existing and proposed building-mounted signs.
3. **Construction drawings.** Specifications and drawings showing the materials, design, dimensions, structural supports, electrical components, and method of illumination.
4. **License and insurance.** Every person who engages in the business of erecting, altering or dismantling signs in the City shall first submit proof of appropriate licenses and a liability insurance policy that indemnifies the City of Richmond and its prior, present and future officials, representatives and employees from all damage suits or actions of every nature brought or claimed against the erector for injuries or damages to persons or

property sustained by any person or persons through any act of omission or negligence of said erector, his servants, agents or employees. Said policy shall contain a clause whereby it cannot be canceled or changed until after written notice has been filed with the City Planner at least 30 days prior to the date of cancellation.

5. **Removal agreement or bond.** The Building Official may require a signed removal agreement, bond or other acceptable surety to guarantee the future removal of a sign.

B. Duties of the City Planner and Building Official.

It shall be the duty of the City Planner and Building Official to review sign permit applications, plans, and specifications. The City shall issue such permits upon determinations by the City Planner and Building Official that the proposed sign conforms to the requirements of this Ordinance, and all other applicable codes and ordinances enforced by the City.

C. Sign Permit Revocable At Any Time.

Rights and privileges accrued under this Article are mere licenses, and may be revoked upon violation of any provision of this Article. If work authorized by an approved sign permit has not been completed within 365 days after date of issuance, the permit shall become null and void, and a new permit shall be necessary to continue the project.

Section 13.10 Nonconforming Signs

All existing signs that do not conform to the provisions of this Article and Ordinance shall be permitted to continue as nonconforming signs until removed or altered, at which time they shall conform to the provisions of this Article and Ordinance. Nonconforming signs shall be subject to the following:

A. Good Working Order.

Nonconforming signs shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements for all signs specified in Section 13.02 (General Standards). Nonconforming signs shall be maintained with all necessary structural and decorative parts, including but not limited to supports, sign frame, and electrical equipment. All sign copy areas shall be intact, and illuminated signs shall be capable of immediate illumination.

B. Servicing.

Painting, servicing, cleaning or minor repairs to a nonconforming sign shall be permitted, provided that the sign is restored to its original design and all work is in compliance with the requirements for all signs specified in Section 13.02 (General Standards).

C. Alterations.

Alterations to nonconforming signs shall be prohibited, except as follows:

1. **Sign copy area.** The sign copy area of a nonconforming sign may be altered, including replacement of sign panels and changes to the sign copy, provided that the degree of nonconformity is not increased, and provided that any sign illumination is brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 13.02F (Illumination).

2. **Billboard signs.** A nonconforming billboard sign may be altered, including replacement of sign panels and changes to the sign copy, provided that the sign area and height are not increased, and provided that any sign illumination is brought into compliance with the provisions of Section 13.02F (Illumination).
3. **Sign frame or structural elements.** Alterations to the sign frame or structural elements of a nonconforming sign shall be permitted, provided that the sign shall be brought into compliance with the maximum sign height and sign area standards for the location and type of sign, as specified in this Article.

Existing sign wiring and ground sign support structures may be re-used, provided that permitted alterations will not increase any nonconformity caused by inadequate sign setback.

Section 13.11 Sign Removal by City Action

A. Abandoned or Unlawful Signs.

The City Planner shall have the authority to determine whether a sign is unlawful or has been abandoned, as defined in Section 25.02 (Definitions), and subject to appeal by an aggrieved person to the Board of Zoning Appeals. The City Planner may order the removal of such signs in accordance with the following procedure:

1. **Determination.** Written notification of the determination and any order for removal shall be provided by certified mail to the owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property upon which the sign is located.
2. **Removal.** Abandoned or unlawful signs shall be removed within 60 days after notification of a determination and order for removal by the City Planner. All support structures and components shall be completely removed. Failure to remove the sign shall constitute grounds for the City to seek Circuit Court approval to remove the sign at the property owner's expense. The owner shall reimburse the City for removal costs, or the City may place a lien on the property for necessary removal expenses.

B. Damaged Signs.

Signs determined to be in a damaged condition by the Building Official shall be repaired or removed within 60 days after notification by certified mail. If such action is not taken by the owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property where the sign is located, the Building Official shall have the authority to order the repair or removal of the damaged sign. The owner shall reimburse the City for repair or removal costs, or the City may place a lien on the property for such expenses.

C. Unsafe Signs.

The Building Official shall attempt to contact the sign owner to request that the unsafe condition be corrected. However, the Building Official may order the removal of any sign determined to be unsafe without prior notice. After removal, the Building Official shall notify the property owner by certified mail of the action taken and the reasons for the action. The owner shall reimburse the City for removal, storage and reclamation costs, or the City may place a lien on the property for such expenses.

D. Nonconforming Signs.

The elimination of nonconforming signs in the City is hereby declared to be for a public purpose and for a public use. The City may purchase nonconforming signs for the purpose of removal, or may initiate condemnation proceedings for nonconforming signs determined to be in violation of Section 13.10 (Nonconforming Signs) requirements.

E. Temporary Signs.

Temporary signs affixed within a street right-of-way or corner clearance area, without a valid permit, or after permit expiration may be removed by the City without notice. Signs removed shall be held by the City for five (5) calendar days, after which the sign may be discarded.

Section 13.12 Exceptions

The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) shall have the authority to grant an exception from the strict application of these regulations, provided that such relief may be granted without substantially impairing the intent of this Article. Application and consideration of sign exceptions shall be in accordance with the following procedures and standards:

A. Applications for Sign Exceptions.

Any party who has been denied a permit for a proposed sign may file a request for an exception to this Article with the BZA within 30 calendar days of the decision. Applications for exceptions from one (1) or more provisions of this Article shall be submitted in accordance with Section 24.05 (Applications). Following a public hearing the BZA may consider the standards stated in Section for the merits of granting an exception to particular requirements of this Article.

B. Procedures for Consideration of Sign Exceptions.

Applications for exceptions from the provisions of this Article shall be considered by the BZA in accordance with the procedures specified in Article 24 (Board of Zoning Appeals).

C. Exception Standards for Signs.

The BZA shall consider the following standards while reviewing any application for an exception from one (1) or more provisions of this Article.

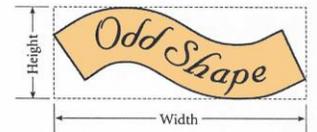
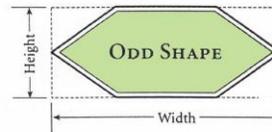
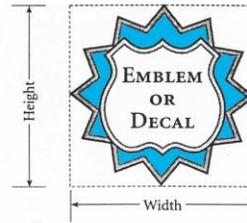
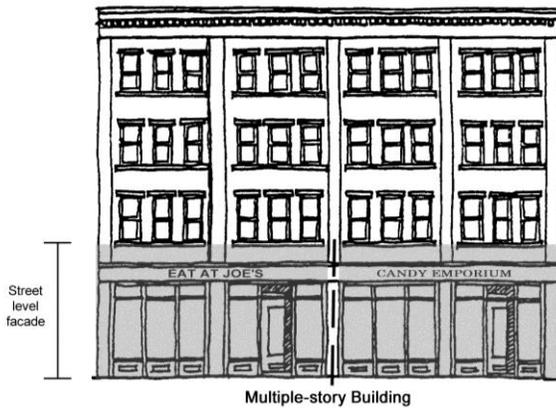
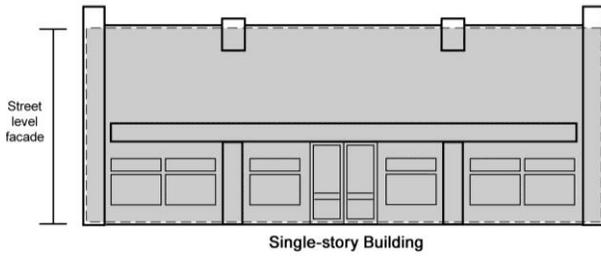
1. **Obstructions.** Construction of a conforming sign would obstruct the vision of motorists or otherwise endanger public health or safety.
2. **Visibility.** A conforming sign would be blocked from the sight of passing motorists due to existing buildings, trees or other obstructions.
3. **Site features.** Construction of a conforming sign would require removal or severe alteration to significant features on the site, such as removal of trees, alteration of the natural topography, obstruction of a natural drainage course, or alteration or demolition of significant historical features or site amenities.
4. **Scale.** A sign that exceeds the allowable height or area standards of this Article would be more appropriate in scale because of the large size or frontage of the premises or building.

5. **Aesthetics.** The exception shall not adversely impact the character or appearance of the building or lot or the neighborhood.
6. **Minimal.** The exception shall be the minimum necessary to allow reasonable use, visibility, or readability of the sign.
7. **Intent of this Article.** The exception shall not substantially impair the intent and purpose of this Article.

D. Findings and Conditions.

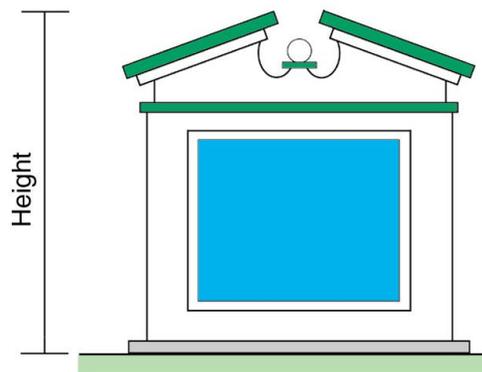
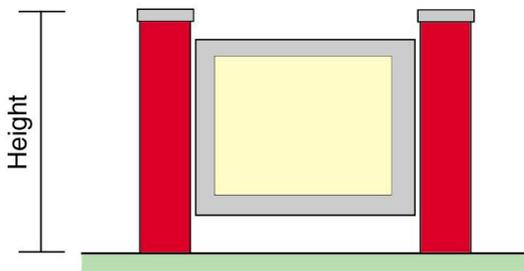
In a motion granting or denying a sign exception, the BZA shall state the specific grounds for the decision, which shall be supported by specific findings of fact. The BZA may attach any conditions to approval of a sign exception regarding the location, character, timing of display, or other features of the proposed sign as deemed reasonable.

ILLUSTRATIONS



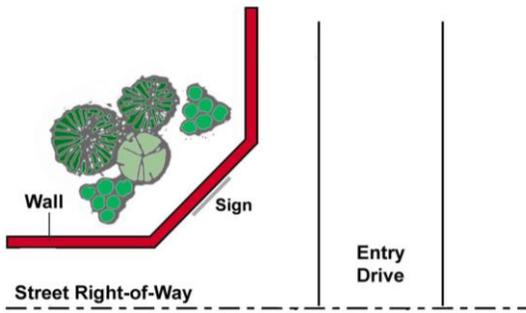
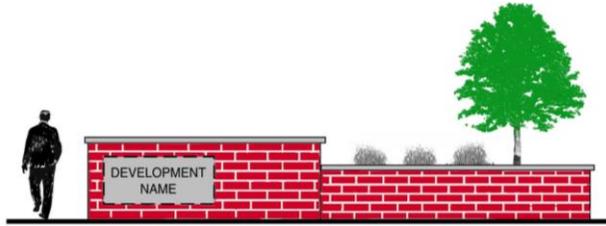
Signable Area

Computation of Sign Area

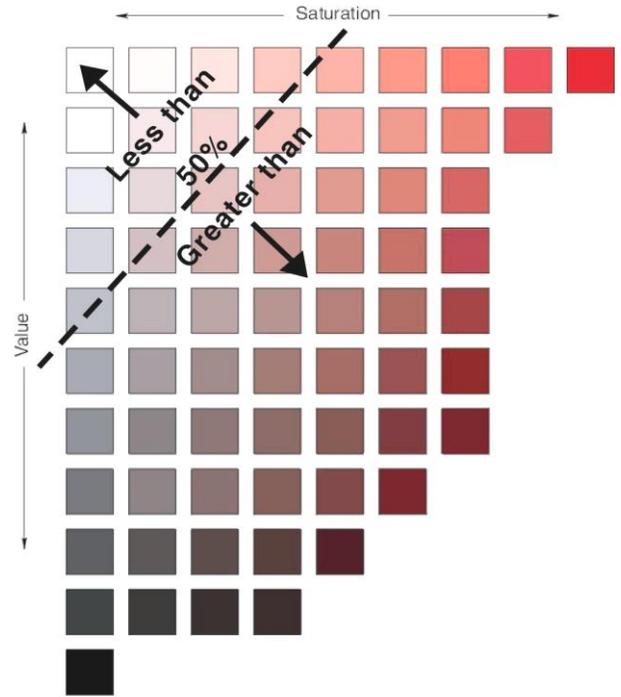


Sign Height

ILLUSTRATIONS



Site Entry Feature With Signage



Color Value and Saturation



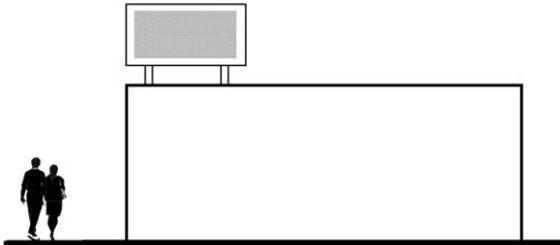
External illumination only



Internal illumination permitted

Sign Illumination

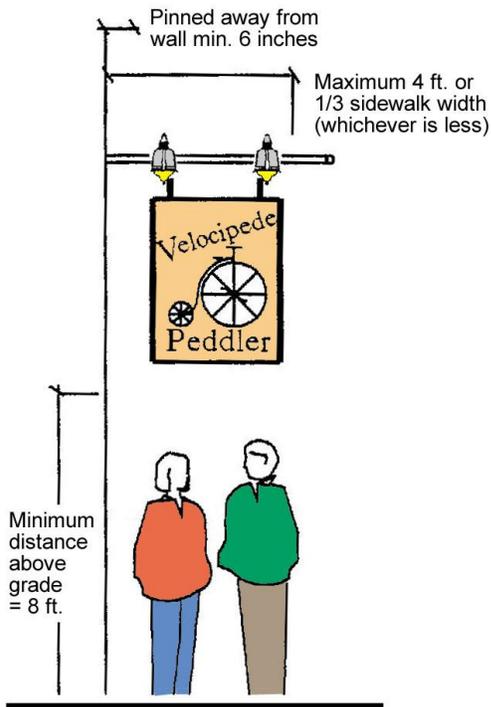
ILLUSTRATIONS



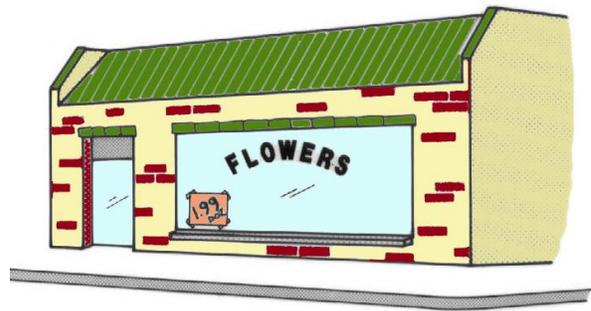
Roof Sign



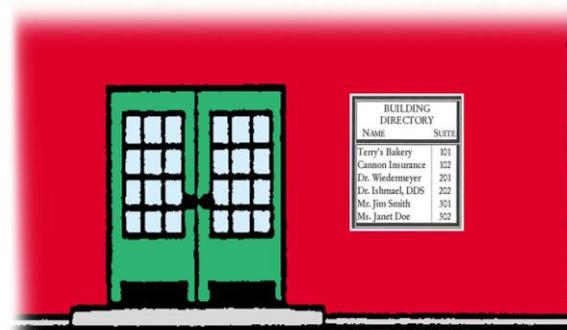
Awning Sign



Projecting Sign Detail

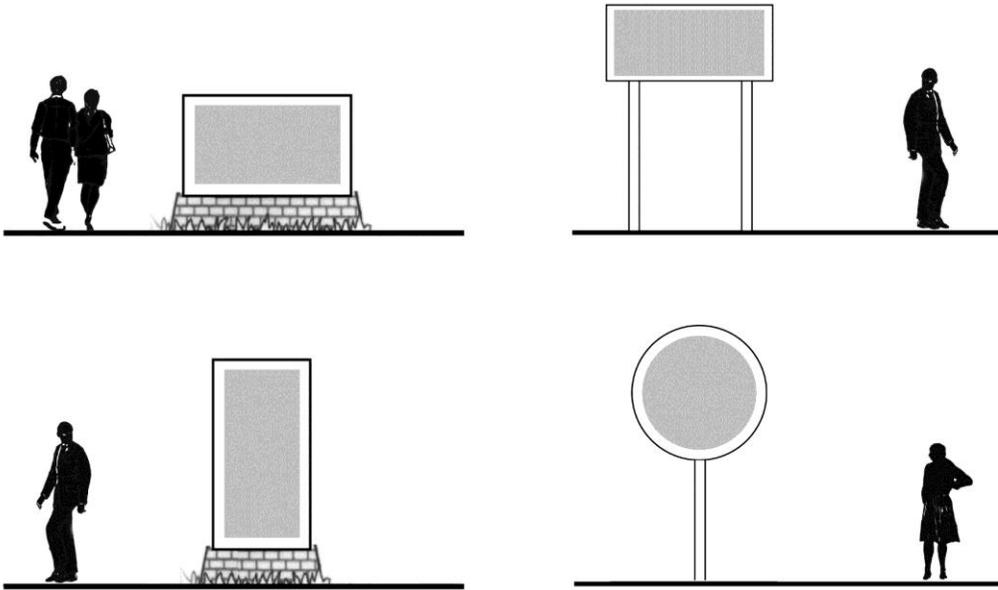


Window Sign



Building Directory

ILLUSTRATIONS



Various Types of Ground Signs

