
6.10 Standards for Permanent Signs by Zoning District.

(A) Signs in the R1, R2, R3, R4, N1, and N2 Districts.

- (1) Two permanent ground-mounted signs may be allowed for each major subdivision with 50 or more lots, or multi-family development in the N1-B and N2-B districts provided that the signs meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Signs may be permitted, at each development entrance along a city, county or state road;
 - (b) The signs shall be setback 15 feet from the public right-of-way and five feet from any adjacent property lines;
 - (c) Each sign may have a maximum sign area of 32 square feet not including any fence or wall on which the sign is located;
 - (d) The base of all signs shall be constructed of the same building materials used for any multi-family building or other material approved by the city planner;
 - (e) No such sign or any portion of the structure shall exceed five feet in height; and
 - (f) Only concealed external light illumination may be permitted.
- (2) Signage for permitted uses on residential lots may not exceed six square feet and may not exceed two sides. Signage shall be setback five feet from the public right-of-way and from adjacent property lines.
- (3) Public and institutional uses may have one wall sign and one ground-mounted sign totaling a maximum of 60 square feet in area.
 - (a) The signs shall be setback 15 feet from the public right-of-way and five feet from any adjacent property lines;
 - (b) The sign may include a changeable copy sign provided that it does not comprise more than 20 percent of the total sign area of the sign;
 - (c) No such sign or any portion of the structure shall exceed five feet in height; and
 - (d) Only concealed external light illumination may be permitted.
- (4) Larger signs for public and institutional uses may be considered as part of a conditional use permit.
- (5) Commercial or office uses that are permitted in the N1-B district shall comply with the sign standards established for the NC-F district in Section 6.10(C), Standards for the C1, C2 and NCF District, below.

(B) General Requirements for Signs in the C1, C2, I1, NC-F, and ED-F Districts.

- (1) No pylon sign shall exceed 20 feet in height above the average grade at the centerline of the street in front of the property. All ground-mounted flag poles, banners and pennants are also restricted by this height limitation. Non-commercial flags are exempt from this height limit.
- (2) Illumination of signs is permitted, but in accordance with the restrictions stated under Section 6.9 (E), Illumination.
- (3) **Sidewalk Signs.**
 - (a) Sidewalks signs are permitted in the C1 and C2 districts only.

- (b) All sidewalk signs shall be limited to two feet in width and three and one-half feet in height, including the support members.
- (c) No sign shall have more than two faces.
- (d) The sign shall be placed only in front of the business near the curb, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- (e) One sign is permitted for each business, and it shall be removed from the sidewalk at the end of each business day.
- (f) No sidewalk sign shall be illuminated.
- (g) No zoning certificate shall be required.

(C) Standards for the C1, C2, and NC-F Districts.

(1) Size.

- (a) A total of one and one-half square feet of signage for each lineal foot of building frontage shall be permitted. One additional square foot of signage shall be permitted for each lineal foot of land frontage.
- (b) If a building has multiple frontages, one additional square foot of signage (for the total allotted sign area) shall be permitted for each lineal foot of building frontage, not to exceed 100 square feet except as limited by paragraphs (c) and (d) below.
- (c) Not more than ten percent of each façade in the C1-B, C2-B, or NC-F districts may be used for wall signage. The façade area shall be determined by multiplying the total building width by the height of the wall or surface area (See Figure 6-2).

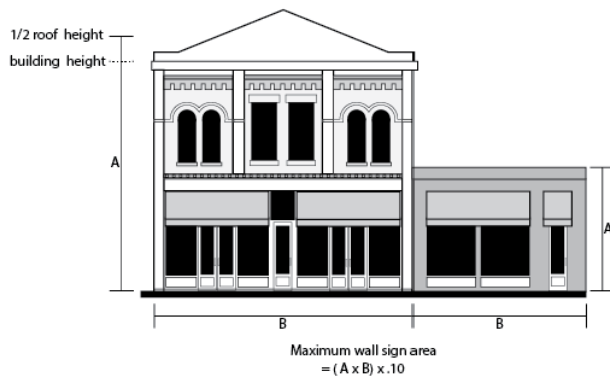


Figure 6-2 Calculation of maximum wall sign area.

- (d) Either one pylon or one ground sign may be permitted for each building frontage and shall not exceed 100 square feet per face and shall not have more than two faces.
- (e) The total area of all signs shall not exceed allotted sign area.
- (f) Freestanding signs in the NC-F district shall be limited to one ground sign with a maximum height of three feet and a maximum square footage of 12 square feet.

(2) Location.

- (a) Signs may be wall signs and located anywhere on the wall surface of the building. Signs may be projecting signs and may project not more than 36 inches beyond the face of the

building and must have a minimum clearance of eight feet above a sidewalk and 15 feet above driveways or alleys.

- (b) A pylon or ground sign may be located anywhere back of the street right-of-way lines, subject to other restrictions in this section.
- (c) Signs may be on the vertical faces of awnings and may project below the lower edge of the awning not more than 12 inches. The bottom of awning signs shall be no less than eight feet above the sidewalk or grade at any point. No point of the sign shall project above the vertical awning face.

(3) **Pylon and Ground Mounted Signs Adjacent to Residential Uses.**

- (a) Internally lit pylon and ground mounted signs shall be permitted provided that the background of the sign display area shall be of a dark color that prohibits light from being emitted to adjacent property. Only the letters and business image may be of a lighter color.
- (b) Externally lit pylon or ground mounted signs shall be of a lighting design where external lighting is downcast and does not extend to adjacent property.

(D) **Signs in the I1 and ED-F Districts.**

(1) **Size.**

- (a) For each industrial property, a maximum of one square foot for each lineal foot of building frontage or one-half square foot for each lineal foot of land frontage is permitted, whichever is greater, as a total allotted sign area.
- (b) No wall sign shall exceed 200 square feet per wall.
- (c) One ground or pylon sign may be permitted for each building frontage. The sign shall not exceed 100 square feet per face and shall not have more than two faces.
- (d) The total area of all signs shall not exceed the allotted sign area.

(2) **Location.**

- (a) Signs may be wall signs and located anywhere on the surface of the building. Signs may be pylon or ground signs. Signs may be projecting signs and may project no more than 36 inches beyond the face of the building and must have a minimum clearance of eight feet above a sidewalk and 25 feet above driveways or alleys.

(E) **Signs in the CD-S and PI-S Districts.**

(1) **Height.**

- (a) Ground and kiosk signs may not exceed eight feet in height above the center line of the street in front of the property.
- (b) Pylon signs are prohibited.

(2) **Size.**

- (a) Square footage for ground and kiosk signs shall be approved pursuant to an approved signage plan. A ground sign shall not exceed 100 square feet per face and shall not have more than two faces. A kiosk sign shall not exceed 20 square feet per face and shall not have more than four faces. Not more than ten percent of the building elevation area may be used for wall signage.

(3) **Signage Plan for the CD-S District.**

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- (a) For colleges wishing to install additional on-campus signage, except for wall signage identifying the name of the building, a signage plan shall be submitted to the city planner for review and approval. The signage plan shall include locations, sizes, dimensions, materials, height, and color of all existing and proposed ground and kiosk signs of the college. Except as otherwise provided for in this section, all new wall, ground and kiosk signs shall be subject to the zoning certificate approval process (See Section 8.4.4, Type 1 Review Procedure (City Planner Decision without Development Review Committee Review)) and all other applicable provisions of this section.
- (4) **Location.**
- (a) Signs may be wall signs located anywhere on the surface of the building.
 - (b) Signs may be projecting signs and may project not more than 36 inches beyond the face of the building, and must have a minimum clearance of eight feet above a sidewalk and 15 feet above a driveway or alley.
 - (c) Signs may be ground or kiosk signs.
 - (d) With written permission from staff, signs may be placed within the boulevard or on other public property provided they do not present a public safety hazard and are not placed adjacent to a residential use.
 - (e) Signs shall be subject to sight distance triangle setbacks (See Section 3.1.6(E), Height Limit at Street Corners (Traffic Safety Visibility Triangle), as defined in this LDC).
- (F) **Signs in the H-O District and on Heritage Preservation Sites.**
- (1) This subsection applies to the H-O district and other sites that have been designated as heritage preservation sites.
 - (2) Sign computations shall follow the guidelines for the base zoning district.
 - (3) Signage shall be designed to enhance and complement the historic character of buildings within the downtown district. Wherever possible, sign review shall be informed by the use of historic photographs or visual records of the building or site.
 - (4) Prior to the issuance of a zoning certificate, the applicant shall be required to apply for, and receive, a Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign.
 - (5) Heritage Preservation Commission and city staff shall review the sign permit application in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - (a) All sign permits for property within the H-O District shall comply with both the C1 and H-O District requirements of this section.
 - (b) Temporary signs meeting the requirements of this section do not require review by the Heritage Preservation Commission and can be approved by the City Planner.
 - (c) Pylon signs are prohibited.
 - (d) Signage should meet the Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
 - (6) **Placement.** Signs shall be positioned so that they are an integral design feature of the building, i.e., signs shall complement and enhance the architectural features of the building. They shall be placed so that they do not destroy architectural details such as stone arches, glass transom panels, or decorative brickwork. Unless other placement is specifically approved by the Heritage

Preservation Commission for reasons stated in the Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Heritage Preservation Commission, signs may be placed only as follows:

- (a) At or above the horizontal lintel, storefront cornice, or beltcourse, or above the storefront windows;
- (b) Projecting from the building;
- (c) Applied to or painted on canvas/fabric awnings only on the valance;
- (d) In areas where signs were historically attached (see Figure 6-3); or
- (e) Wall signs for first floor businesses shall be beneath the second floor windows.



Figure 6-3: Illustration of where signs are historically attached to buildings in the downtown historic district.

- (7) **Sign Shape.** Signs shall be designed to match the historic time period elements. Wall signs shall include a raised rectangular border that sets the sign apart from the building surface or hanging space. Wall signs shall make use of individual raised letters. Projecting signs may be fabricated in a variety of shapes appropriate to the building or business.
- (8) **Colors.** Sign colors shall coordinate with the building façade to which the sign is attached. A combination of soft/neutral shades and dark/rich shades will best reflect the historical time period. No more than two colors shall be used for the sign letters. The Heritage Preservation Commission may adopt a historic preservation color palette as part of the Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines.
- (9) **Material.** Signs and sign letters should be made of wood, metal or weatherproof material that is in keeping with the corresponding historic period of the building. Signs that appear to be made of plastic are prohibited. Brackets for projecting signs shall be made of iron or other painted metal, and shall be secured at the top of the sign, and anchored into the mortar, not the masonry.
- (10) **Message.** The sign message shall be legible and shall relate to the nature of the business. These requirements may be accomplished through the use of words, pictures, names, symbols and logos. Logos, if used, shall be incorporated into signage designs compatible with the Historic District.
- (11) **Lettering.** Lettering styles shall be legible and shall relate to the character of the property's use and the era of the building. Lettering on wall signs is encouraged to be of a serif lettering style. Wall signs shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering and any logo shall occupy no more than 60 percent of the total sign area and shall not extend outside of sign

borders. If telephone numbers and websites are desired, the heritage preservation commission encourages them to be located on window and door signs. Telephone numbers and websites may be included on other sign types, provided they are clearly secondary to the primary message of the sign and occupy no more than 12 percent of the total sign area.

- (12) **Illumination.** External illumination of signs is permitted by incandescent, LED, or fluorescent light, but shall emit a continuous white light that prevents direct shining onto the ground or adjacent buildings. Exposed neon signs shall be permitted when installed inside windows or the interior of the building. With the exception of lighted "open" signs, or temporary window displays of products sold using non-twinkling, non-intermittent, non-flashing lighting strings, internally illuminated signs are not permitted. For purposes of this clause, internally illuminated sign means the illumination of a sign by self-illumination or by an artificial source of light either on the face of the sign, such as light emitting diodes (LEDs) or light bulbs, or contained within such sign, including, but not limited to, fluorescent and neon signs. Flashing, intermittent, rotating signs or signs that create the illusion of movement are prohibited. Exceptions to this guideline shall be allowed for public service, time/temperature and theater signs.
- (13) **Historic Building Names/Years/Ghost Signs.** Permanent historic names, years, and ghost signs on buildings shall not be removed and shall be reviewed by the heritage preservation commission when changed or painted. These signs are not subject to the standard sign area requirement.
- (G) **Signs in the PD-O District.** Signs approved as part of a previously approved PUD shall be allowed to continue under the PD-O district. Any changes to a sign, other than copy changes and general maintenance, in the PD-O district shall be subject to the applicable standards of the underlying base zoning district.

(Ord. No. 1006, § 1, 7-23-2019; Ord. No. 1045 , § 3, 10-18-2022)