



Legislation Text

File #: 22-339, **Version:** 1

Meeting Date: May 19, 2022

To: Members of the Planning Commission

From: Reeve Needham, Assistant City Planner

Review Updates to Land Development Code Signage Regulations within the Historic District.

Action Requested: Review and Provide Feedback on Updates to Land Development Code Signage Regulations within the Historic District.

Summary Report: At the February 10, 2022 Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting, commissioners discussed proposed changes to the Land Development Code (LDC) regarding signage regulations. Additional background information is available in the February HPC packet and is listed as an attachment. Given the feedback, staff have prepared a preliminary draft of redlined changes to the LDC. After the HPC's discussion on May 12, 2022 and any additional feedback from the Planning Commission, the draft language will be further refined. This came about with the goal is to provide more guidance to property and business owners on sign regulation in the LDC.

Please see the attached redlined draft for the LDC signage regulating the C-1 and H-O district. Additional citywide regulation about signage can also be found in the LDC Article 6 and a link is provided in the attachments.

Below is a summary of proposed changes, comments and questions. Some revisions are being recommended by staff and others are based off of discussion from the HPC at their last meeting. The revisions are listed below:

Addition:

"Signage is encouraged to meet the guidelines from the Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties."

- Staff comments: Further reinforcement of the guidelines that the HPC uses in their review of signs.

Removal:

~~“(6) Sign Types-~~

- ~~(a) Wall Signs. These are signs mounted flush against the building or painted directly on the building.~~
- ~~(b) Projecting Signs. These are signs that protrude from the building's surface. They include perpendicular signs that hang out over the sidewalk, marquee signs, and other variations.~~
- ~~(c) Ground Signs. These are signs that are not attached to the building.~~
- ~~(d) Window Signs. These are signs either painted or hung on the windows visible to the public from the exterior.~~

~~(e) Upper Story Window Signs. These are signs either painted or hung on windows visible to the public from the exterior.~~

~~(f) Awning Signs. A sign printed on an awning along the valance or skirt. The HPC recommends that awnings; 1) retract rather than be fixed on a rigid frame, 2) are open on the sides rather than closed, 3) are fabricated of material that has a cloth-like appearance rather than a glossy or reflective material, and 4) are free of signs or graphics, except that if signs or graphics are included, they are located only on the valance."~~

- Staff comments: Definitions for sign types are included in LDC 9.2 Definitions so it is unnecessary for some definitions to be included here. Additionally, these definitions differ from that of LDC 9.2 which is confusing.

Addition:

"Signs may be placed only as follows...Applied to or painted on canvas/fabric awnings *only on the valance.*"

- Staff comments: This was included in the above definition of awning signs and recommended criteria for placement.

Addition:

"**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. *Stark black and stark white are prohibited from wall signs.*"

- Staff comments: As this has been the informal practice of the HPC in review of signs, this should be codified to be explicit in regulation.

Removal:

"**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. ~~Logos and lettering shall occupy no more than 60 percent of the total sign area and shall not extend outside the sign borders."~~

- Staff comments: This is included in the section below on lettering and is unnecessary to include in both locations.

Addition and Removal:

"**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 signs are encouraged to be serif font.* ~~Lettering on wall signs shall be in a serif font.~~ 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.* ~~Projecting signs may utilize a font other than serif.~~ Telephone numbers and websites may be included, provided they are clearly secondary to the primary message of the sign and occupy no more than 20 percent of the total sign area allotted to lettering."

- Staff comments: The removal of the serif font requirement has been discussed and agreed upon by the HPC. The HPC would like to prohibit websites and telephone numbers from all signs except for door signs. Staff still need to discuss this option with the City Attorney.

Additional Comments:

The updated image (drawn by the City's Communication department) for *Figure 6-3: Illustration of where signs are historically attached to buildings in the downtown historic district* will replace the existing image.

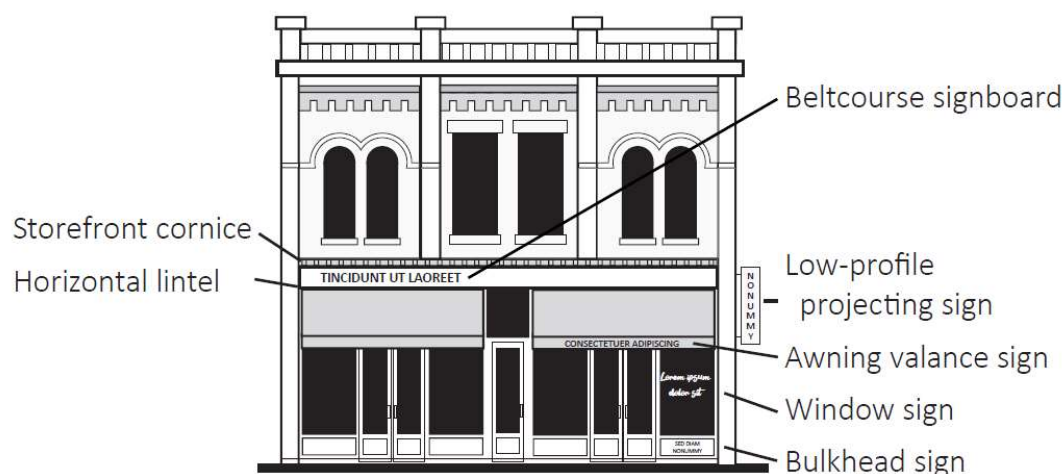


Figure 6-3. Illustration of where signs are historically attached to buildings in the downtown historic district.

There has been some confusion over what counts as a window sign versus a window display. Citywide, window signs are exempt from regulation under LDC 6.5 Exemptions “Window Signs. Signs that are painted to or attached to the inside of a window that do not cover more than 50% of the window shall be exempt.” However, this exemption seems to contradict the illumination requirements within the H-O district. Staff and the HPC are recommending to prohibit all internally illuminated window signs, regardless of size, besides neon “open” signs in the H-O District.

Definitions Edits:

The addition of four definitions:

- **Awning.** A canopy or covering structure projecting from and attached to a building.
- **Lettering.** The symbols for speech sounds written on something.
- **Lettering Style.** An assortment or set of type or characters all of one style and sometimes one size.
- **Logo.** A graphic mark, emblem, or symbol used to aid and promote public identification and recognition. It may be of an abstract or figurative design or include the text of the name it represents as in a wordmark.

The revision of two definitions:

- **Sign, Awning.** A sign that is painted on or attached to an awning. ~~An awning is defined as a canopy or covering structure projecting from and attached to a building.~~
- **Sign, Window.** A sign that is applied or attached to the interior of a window ~~or located in such manner within the building that it can readily be seen from the exterior of the building through a window.~~

After feedback from the HPC and PC, staff will continue to refine the language in consultation with the City Attorney. Any LDC text amendment follows the Type 4 review process, which involves a public hearing at Planning Commission, Planning Commission review, and Council decision.

Heritage Preservation Commission Recommendation

The HPC reviewed this item at their May 12, 2022 meeting. A link to watch the meeting is included as an attachment. Their recommendations are below:

- “Signage ~~is encouraged to~~ should meet the guidelines from the Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines and The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.”
- Signs on awnings should only be placed on the valance.
- Telephone numbers and websites should be prohibited on all signs except for door signs. A definition for a door sign would need to be added.
- Internally illuminated window signs should be prohibited within the H-O district except for neon open signs.
- “Ghost signs” (old hand-painted advertising sign that has been preserved on a building for an extended period of time) should not be removed.
- The HPC agreed to the remaining above staff recommendations.

Alternative Options:

PC members can propose other amendments regarding signage.

Financial Impacts: There are associated costs with publishing text amendments.

Tentative Timeline:

June 15, 2022: Review of Language at Heritage Preservation Commission

July 21, 2022: Public Hearing at Planning Commission

August 1, 2022: First Reading at City Council

August 16, 2022: Second Reading and Summary Publication at City Council

August 24, 2022: Summary Publication in Newspaper

September 23, 2022: Ordinance takes effect