

## *SIGNS*

### **SECTION 150.80      PURPOSE AND INTENT.**

Signs have an impact on the character and quality of the environment as a prominent part of the scenery; their suitability or appropriateness helps to set the tone of the neighborhood. The purpose of this ordinance is to protect and promote the general welfare, health, safety, and aesthetics within the City of Annandale through the establishment of comprehensive standards, regulations, and procedures governing the erection, use, and/or display of devices, signs, or symbols serving as visual communicative media to persons. The provisions of this ordinance are intended to encourage creativity, a reasonable degree of freedom of choice, an opportunity for effective communication, and a sense of concern for the visual amenities on the part of media of the type regulated by this ordinance, while at the same time assuring that the public is not endangered, annoyed, or distracted by the unsafe, disorderly, indiscriminate or unnecessary use of such communicative facilities.

### **SECTION 150.81      OBJECTIVES.**

1. To assure compatibility of signs with surrounding land usage, conserve property values in all districts, protect the public investment in streets and highways, promote the safety and recreational value of public travel, and strengthen the economy of the city.
2. To preserve and protect public beauty, distinctive character, and integrity of historic sites, landmarks, and unique local features including, but not limited to, the downtown canopy district by forbidding signs which detract from this objective due to excessive size, height, number, visual impact, undesirable location, improper maintenance, spacing, or illumination.
3. To promote traffic safety by eliminating the proliferation of small, hard-to-read, and distracting signs along heavily traveled roads.
4. To respect the reasonable rights of other advertisers whose messages are displayed.
5. To reduce conflict among private signs and lighting, and between private and public signs and lighting.
6. To recognize there exist certain areas within Annandale that require special consideration and to provide a vehicle in which these areas can be handled. The areas of particular concern are: (a) scenic areas, (b) community and regional shopping centers, and (c) industrial parks. The Commission and Council may establish special regulations for signage which are either more restrictive or less restrictive than those provided by this ordinance in the areas of special control.

### **SECTION 150.82      SIGN REQUIREMENTS.**

#### **A.      DEFINITIONS**

1. **Off premises sign:** A sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service or entertainment not exclusively related to the premises where such a sign is located or to which it is affixed (includes billboards).
2. **On premises sign:** A sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service or entertainment related to the premises where such sign is located or to which it is affixed.
3. **Free Standing Sign:** A sign which rests on the ground or is mounted on a structure such as a frame, posts, or poles.
4. **Wall Sign:** A sign which is attached to a wall of the principal building. Wall signs shall not be higher than the eave line or the parapet wall of the principal building. A commercial message on any canopy or awning shall be considered a wall sign and included in the wall sign limits outlined in this Ordinance.
5. **Temporary sign:** Any portable or other sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure or a sign otherwise designed to be temporary as evidenced by its purpose or construction. Banners or pennants are also considered to be temporary signs.
6. **Commercial message:** Any sign, wording, logo or other representation that, directly or indirectly, names, advertises, or calls attention to a business, product, entertainment, service or activity.
7. **Window Signs:** Signs attached to the inside or outside glass of a window so as to be visible from the outside of the building shall be treated as wall signs for purposes of maximum individual sign sizes and total sign area and building façade coverage allowed.
8. **Vehicle Sale Signs:** Commercial messages painted, applied, or on signs placed in the window of a vehicle on display.
9. **Height:** Specified height limits are as measured from grade. The measurement is intended to be inclusive of all mounting structures.
10. **Monument sign:** Any freestanding sign with its sign face mounted on the ground or mounted on a base at least as wide as the sign and which has a total height not exceeding eight feet in height.
11. **Projecting Sign:** Any sign attached to and projecting out from a building face or wall, generally at right angles, to the building. Projecting signs include signs that extend partially or fully into the right-of-way or partially or fully on private property.

**B. General Performance Standards.**

1. Signs which require a building permit must also apply for that permit separately and are subject to the separate building code rules and fee schedule. In addition, all signs which require electricity shall be subject to the State's electrical code and electrical service wiring shall be buried or concealed.

2. Signs shall not obstruct the view of traffic or pedestrians, nor block the signage of any neighboring property owner at the time of installation.
  3. Except as permitted for projecting signs in the C-1 District, no sign part, including cut out letters, shall project more than 6 inches from the building wall except as otherwise approved with a sign permit.
  4. No privately owned sign may be placed within 10 feet of roadway or pedestrian rights of way.
  5. Vehicle Sales Signs shall not exceed 12 inches in height.
  6. No signs are allowed along interior side or rear lot lines if such line borders a residential district.
  7. Signs may be indirectly illuminated with non-glare lighting not exceeding .4 candle meter directed at the sign and not casting light on any adjoining property, with no exposed light source or fixture and only if the light source is fully concealed and defused and does not cast glare onto any adjoining properties.
  8. The City requires professional and aesthetically pleasing mounting structures made specifically for sign mounting. Such structures may be of painted steel or treated wood frames, brick or decorative block. Landscaping around free standing signs is strongly encouraged. Mounting structures which are not specifically designed for sign mounting may be removed by the City after a warning notice to the property owner.
  9. Every sign, including but not limited to those signs for which no permits or permit fees are required, shall be maintained in a safe, presentable and good structural material condition at all times, including the replacement of defective parts, painting, repainting, cleaning, and maintaining the immediate surrounding premises in a clean, sanitary, and inoffensive condition, free of obnoxious substances, rubbish, weeds or other non-manicured vegetation. Signs in good repair are not corroded, do not have deteriorated paint or missing letters, numbers or other parts of their message, and do not have loose members, broken parts, or similar deterioration.
  10. No person shall maintain or permit to be maintained on any premises owned or controlled by him any sign which is in a dangerous or defective condition.
  12. Signs on rocks may be allowed only if they use metal numbers and letters or the commercial message is etched into the rock surface.
  13. If a freestanding sign or sign structure is constructed so that the sign faces are not constructed so as to be back to back, the angle shall not exceed ten degrees. If the angle is greater than ten degrees, the total area of both sides of the sign added together shall not exceed the maximum allowable sign area.
  14. All lighting related to signs shall conform to requisite district standards in regards to lighting and glare.
- C. **Non-Conforming or Abandoned Signs:** Non-conforming or Abandoned signs shall be subject to the requirements of Section 150.06 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- D. **Prohibited Signs.**

1. Flashing signs, off premises signs, and beacons or search lights are prohibited.
2. No sign shall be placed, erected, or maintained on fences, trees, power and light poles, or the supports thereof, except as allowed for special events.
3. No sign shall, by reason of its location, color, illumination, or intensity, obstruct vision of drivers or pedestrians or obscure visibility of any traffic control device, sign, or signal. Illumination must be effectively shielded so as not to impair vision of any operator of a motor vehicle. Illumination with flashing lights is prohibited in all zones. Any sign which imitates or resembles an official traffic sign or signal or which bears the words "Stop," "Caution," "Danger," "Warning," or similar words is prohibited.
4. Any sign which bears or contains statements, words or pictures of an obscene, pornographic, or immoral character is prohibited.
5. Any sign which emits audible sound, odor, or visible matter is prohibited.
6. No signs shall be painted directly on any building.
7. No sign shall display any moving parts or simulate motion, have animation, or moving pictures.
8. Neon lighted signs are not permitted within the C-1 District.

E. **Required Signs.** A minimum of one address sign identifying the correct property number as assigned by the City is required on each principal building in all districts. Such sign must be of sufficient size to be legible from the nearest street but shall not exceed 9 square feet in area. The numbers shall be metal, glass, plastic or durable material and the numbers must not be less than 3 ½ inches in height, in contrasting color to the base or made of some reflective material and so placed to be easily seen from the street.

F. **Permitted Signs.** The following signs, if constructed as permanent signs with maintenance free/permanent finish material (including non-changeable lettering or numbering except as specifically allowed herein) and in compliance with the Building Code as adopted by the City and other requirements herein, are permitted in any district, unless otherwise specified, without separate review or permit by the City (other than a building permit, if required):

1. **Integral Building Signs:** Names of buildings, dates of erection, monumental citations, and commemorative tablets when made a permanent and integral part of the building.
2. **Directional Signs:** Traffic control or informational traffic signs in conformance with public traffic sign standards displayed for purposes of direction, public safety, or convenience including signs identifying rest rooms, freight entrances, etc.
3. **Real Estate Signs:** Properties that are for sale, rent, or lease may display a sign for the purpose of advertising the lease, rent, or sale of property. Only 1 such sign shall be permitted per street and side- street frontage (i.e. corner lots may have one sign on each street frontage) and each sign shall not exceed 6 square feet in area and 4 feet in height in residential districts and 12 square feet in area and 5 feet in height in other districts. The sign shall be removed within 14 days after the closing of the sale, rental or lease of

the property, weather permitting.

5. Construction Signs: Sites where there is an open building permit may display one free-standing or wall sign placed during construction, not exceeding 32 square feet in area and 8 feet in height, identifying parties involved in construction, owner's name, intended use or describing the construction process, but not including the advertisement of any product unrelated to the construction project. Any construction sign shall be removed within 5 days following completion of construction or within two years of the issuance of the building permit whichever is sooner.
6. Non-commercial Signs: Noncommercial signs of any size or number, whether announcing a campaign, drive or event of a political, civic, philanthropic, educational, or religious nature, may be posted in any number from 46 days before the state primary in a state general election year until ten days following the state general election. In a non-state general election year, such signs shall be limited to 1 free standing or wall sign not exceeding 6 square feet in total surface area and 5 feet in height which may be posted 30 days prior to the event advertised and must be removed within 10 days following the event.
7. Off-street Parking Signs: One wall or free standing sign, not exceeding 6 square feet in area per entrance to a parking facility announcing the intended uses, conditions of parking, and the name of the parking facility.
8. Development Signs: One sign not to exceed 32 square feet in area and 8 feet in height per residential development at the entrance to display the name of the development.
9. Temporary Signs: In industrial and commercial districts, 1 on premises temporary sign of unlimited size (but meeting all visibility, safety and public nuisance provisions outlined in the Standards section) is allowed for up to 5 days twice per year. In all districts, 1 on premises temporary free standing sign not exceeding 32 square feet in area and 6 feet in height that is displayed for no more than 14 consecutive days is allowed up to 4 times per calendar year on a premise. All portable signs are considered temporary signs and may only be used within the specified time limits. In industrial and commercial districts, on premises temporary wall signs are allowed as long as they do not cause the total wall sign areas or façade coverage limits to be exceeded and as long as they are removed or replaced at least every 30 days. Temporary signs are not allowed on any wall space above the canopies in the Canopy District.
10. Private Sales Event Sign: Garage sale signs will be permitted in conjunction with the occasional (not more than 2 times per year and 3 days per time) sale of household goods and materials from private residences, but they may not exceed 4 square feet in area or 3 feet in height and may only be posted on private property with the permission of the owner – no such signs are allowed in public right of way or on utility poles.
11. Identification Signs: Single family to 4-plex identification signs (such as address and/or name plates identifying the occupants) are permitted if not exceeding 3 square feet in area and 4 feet in height and identification signs for multi-family buildings of 5 or more units if not exceeding 24 square feet in area and 5 feet in height.
12. Government Signs:

- a. Signs of a public, non-commercial nature including safety signs, danger signs, trespassing signs, traffic signs, signs indicating scenic or historical points of interest, memorial plaques and the like, when these signs are erected by or on order of a public officer or employee in the performance of official duty.
  - b. The City Council may approve and/or construct community directory signs for the purpose of providing information and directions for private and/or public property. Such signs shall be considered a class of Government Signs, and shall be subject to the following conditions:
    - 1) The City shall determine design, location, materials, lighting, and all other aspects of the sign.
    - 2) With the approval of the property owners, such signs may be located upon private property, even where the sign does not necessarily relate to the use of the property on which it is located.
    - 3) Such signs may be located upon public property or right of way, provided that the sign does not interfere with safe traffic circulation and visibility, nor interfere with the visibility of official traffic signs.
    - 4) The City shall establish policy guidelines for the purpose of considering the display of names of entities to be identified on the directory.
    - 5) Such signs may be considered a public streetscape improvement, and construction and maintenance may be funded through any combination of appropriate City funds, donations, assessments, or other methods.
13. Flags: One flag identifying a government agency or any civic, charitable, religious, institutional, patriotic, corporate, fraternal or similar organization, may be displayed per principal use or lot in any district.

**G. Signs Requiring a Permit.**

- 1. Free standing signs. One on-premises free standing sign is allowed per principal building is allowed for all home occupations, churches, commercial businesses, industrial businesses, public institutions, and public recreational facilities.
  - a. In the R-1, R-2, and R-3 Districts free standing signs shall not exceed 9 square feet in area and 5 feet in height (including mounting structure).
  - b. For Commercial and Industrial Districts, the following free standing signs are allowed:
    - 1) Free standing monument signs may be permitted up to 120 square feet of sign area and 8 feet in height.
    - 2) Free standing signs not exceeding 12 feet in height may be permitted up to 100 square feet in sign area.
    - 3) Free standing signs in excess of 12 feet in height may be permitted up to

80 square feet in sign area. No free standing sign may exceed 15 feet in height in the Canopy District or 25 feet in all other Commercial and Industrial Districts. Signs greater than 15 feet in height shall have decorative bases / support structures made from brick, stone, masonry, or similar materials for a minimum of the bottom 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the height of the sign.

- 4) For parcels with street frontage in excess of 100 lineal feet, a second on premises free standing sign not exceeding 35 square feet in area or 8 feet in height may be allowed along the street frontage which exceeds 100 lineal feet when in receipt of a Conditional Use Permit, except in the Canopy District, where only one free standing sign is allowed.
2. Wall signs. One on-premises wall sign is allowed per street frontage is allowed for all home occupations, churches, commercial businesses, industrial businesses, public institutions, and public recreational facilities.
- a. The signs shall be placed on the side of the building facing the street.
  - b. In the R-1, R-2, and R-3 Districts wall signs are permitted up to 9 square feet in area.
  - c. In the Commercial and Industrial Districts, the following wall signs are allowed:
    - 1) One wall sign may be allowed per business entrance in approved multi-tenant buildings provided it is part of a comprehensive sign plan.
    - 2) The total number of wall signs shall not exceed 15% of any building façade.
    - 3) Projecting Signs. One projecting sign is allowed per commercial business building in the C-1, Central Business District, in addition to permitted wall signs, subject to the following standards:
      - a. The projecting sign shall not be greater in size than 1 square foot for every 2 feet of linear building frontage or 14 square feet, whichever is least.
      - b. The projecting sign shall count towards the allowable wall sign area.
      - c. The projecting sign shall be hung at a right angle from the building face. Corner properties are allowed to project from the corner of the building.
      - d. The projecting sign shall not project from the building more than 4 feet.
      - e. The projecting sign shall not extend over the top of the building line or highest parapet.

- f. There shall be at least 8 feet of clearance below the projecting sign.
  - g. All business buildings may have a sign under an awning up to 6 square feet in area provided the sign provides 7.5 feet of clearance. Such signage shall count towards the projecting sign allowance.
  - h. Signs printed on the valance of an awning are permitted provided the sign is no greater than 1 foot in height. Such signs do not count towards the permitted sign area for wall and/or projecting signs.
  - i. Signs shall be setback a distance equal to 33% of the width of the building from an adjacent property.
  - j. All signage shall comply with the design standards and the requirements of the Annandale Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan.
3. Electronic and Changeable Message Signs. Up to 30% of the square footage of one sign per parcel located in a commercial zoning district (other than the Canopy District) may have changeable commercial messages. Such changeable messages must be maintained to the same standards as required for permanent sign messages or they will fall under the nuisance provisions outlined in this Ordinance and be subject to removal by the City.

#### **H. Administration.**

- 1. No signs other than those defined as permitted signs shall be erected without a permit issued by the City.
- 2. Applications for sign permits shall be made to the City Zoning Administrator on forms provided by the City and shall include a site plan, detailed sketch, sign plans, and a fee as set by the City Council from time to time. The permit will be void if the sign is not constructed within 90 days of approval.
- 3. A comprehensive sign plan may be presented as one permit request for business premises which occupy a shopping center, industrial park, or scenic area development. Such a plan shall include the location, size, height, lighting and orientation of all signs.
- 4. A double fee will be charged if a non-allowed sign is erected without first obtaining a permit if such sign is subsequently approved. If such sign is not approved, it shall be removed by the owner within 5 days of notice from the City. Failure to remove the sign shall be cause for the City to remove such sign and to charge the property owner for such removal.
- 5. Any sign which violates any provision of this Ordinance, including but not limited to the Maintenance and Repair; Dangerous or Defective Signs; Traffic and Visibility and Safety; any other provisions outlined above; or any temporary sign(s) located on a premises longer than the time allowed by this ordinance shall be considered a public nuisance and prohibited and failure of the owner to repair or remove such sign after

notice by the City shall be cause for the City to remove such sign and to charge the property owner for such removal.

- I. **Severability.** If any section, subsection, clause, or phrase of this sign ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Chapter. The City Council hereby declares that it would have adopted the sign ordinance in each section, subsection, sentence, or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases be declared invalid.

(Ordinance 336, 5-6-13)