



**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA**  
**Department of**  
**Planning and Zoning**

# **Sign Ordinance Update**





# Background

- ▶ **May 2016: Last comprehensive update**
- ▶ **March 2022: Planning Commission requested a digital sign policy**
- ▶ **May 2023: Staff proposed a more comprehensive review**



# Organization, clarity, and conciseness

- ▶ Definitions
- ▶ Remove redundant regulations
- ▶ Re-organize into chart

## Example of current sign regulations

### 9-202 - Commercial, special, overlay, and mixed use district signs.

(A) *Generally.* Except as provided otherwise in this article, the following signs are permitted as accessory uses in the CC, CD, CDX, CG, CL, CR, CSL, KR, NR, CRMU-/L, CRMU/M, CRMU/H, CRMU/X, OC, OCH, OCM(50), OCM(100), CDD, and W-1 zones.

i. *Flags:*

1. *Number and size limits:* One flag per 20 feet (or portion thereof) of lot width with a maximum size of 24 square feet for each flag. The area used for flags shall be deducted from area allowed for permanent wall signage or other temporary wall signage, as permitted in section 9-202(A)ii.1.a or b or in sections 9-201(A)iii.6 or 9-201(A)iii.7.
2. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding flags may only be attached to a pole less than 35 feet in height. Wall mounted flags may only be on a projecting pole no longer than six feet or may be mounted flat against the wall or on a window provided that the flag does not cover more than 20 percent of the glazing area of the window where it is installed. The clearance under a projecting wall mounted flag shall not be less than eight feet directly below the location where the flag is mounted.

ii. *Temporary signs:*

1. *Number, size and time limits:*

- a. A maximum of one sign with a maximum size of one square feet for each linear foot of building width for the wall on which the sign is mounted per frontage on a street, alley, or parking lot only when located on property where a building permit is active. Such sign shall be wall mounted and may only be mounted flat against the wall or installed as a window sign. The area allowed for this temporary signage shall be deducted from area allowed for permanent wall signage or other temporary wall signage, as permitted in section 9.

## Proposed chart

(B) *Sign regulations for a lot containing a non-residential, multi-unit with more than four units, and mixed uses Freestanding monument and wall signs may be illuminated subject to the limitations established by section 9-202.*

<u>Sign type</u>		<u>Maximum number</u>	<u>Maximum sign area</u>	<u>Maximum height</u>
<u>Flags</u>		<u>3</u>	<u>24 square feet</u>	<u>35 feet (freestanding only)</u>
<u>Freestanding monument</u>	<u>Lots 100 feet wide or less</u>	<u>Not permitted</u>		
	<u>Lots more than 100 feet wide but less 200 feet wide</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>32 square feet</u>	<u>6 feet</u>
	<u>Lots 200 feet wide and wider</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>40 square feet</u>	<u>6 feet</u>



# Sign allowance increases

- ▶ Wall sign ratio increase from 1:1 to 1:1.5
- ▶ For buildings over 40 feet, increase to 1:2

Wall sign area allowance in nearby jurisdictions	
	Sign ratio
Arlington	1:2
Montgomery County	1:2
Fairfax County	1:1.5





# Amend SUP requirements

- ▶ Create administrative SUP process
  - ▶ Increase size, height, or number
  - ▶ Temporary sign time limit
  - ▶ Digital signs
- ▶ Allow Illuminated signs over 35 feet without SUP approval





# Digital sign standards

## ▶ Limitations

- ▶ Signs shall comply with the illumination limitations in section 9-204(A);
- ▶ Text, graphics, and images shall not be animated, move, or flash;
- ▶ Signs shall have an automatic photocell dimmer; and
- ▶ The changing of text or graphics shall occur no more than two times per minute.





# Other changes

- ▶ **Nonconforming pole sign regulations**
- ▶ **Remove setbacks for freestanding signs**
- ▶ **Consolidate temporary sign time limits**
- ▶ **Other minor changes**



# Outreach

- ▶ **Planning Commission work sessions**
- ▶ **Community meetings**
- ▶ **Virtual open houses**
- ▶ **Board of Architectural Review, business associations, NAIOP, Commission for Persons with Disabilities**





# Planning Commission recommends approval with the following addition:

Waiver of requirement by special use permit. A special use permit may be obtained pursuant to section 11-500, which authorizes the provision of signage otherwise not permitted by this Article IX, subject to the following:

- (1) The special use permit applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed signage would correspond with the intent of this Article IX; and
- (2) City council finds that:
  - a. The proposed signage has an exceptional design or approach that cannot be accomplished within the existing regulations;
  - b. The proposed signage will not have an adverse impact on the nearby neighborhood; and
  - c. The signs comply with the applicable standards for approval of a special use permit set forth in section 11-504.