



## Zoning Text Amendment #2024-00010 Sign Ordinance Update

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<p><b>Issue:</b> (A) Initiation of a Text Amendment and (B) Public hearing and consideration Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to amend Articles II, IV, VI, IX, and XI related to signs.</p>	<p>Planning Commission Hearing:</p>	<p>January 9, 2025</p>
	<p>City Council Hearing:</p>	<p>March 15, 2025</p>
<p><b>Staff:</b>            Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief, <a href="mailto:tony.lacolla@alexandriava.gov">tony.lacolla@alexandriava.gov</a>            Rachel Drescher, Urban Planner, <a href="mailto:rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov">rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov</a>            Sam Shelby, Principal Planner, <a href="mailto:sam.shelby@alexandriava.gov">sam.shelby@alexandriava.gov</a></p>		
<p><b>Staff recommendation:</b> Staff recommends that the Planning Commission INITIATE and recommend APPROVAL of the text amendment.</p>		

<p><b><u>CITY COUNCIL ACTION, JANUARY 25, 2025:</u></b> On a motion made by Councilmember Chapman, seconded by Vice-Mayor Bagley, the City Council voted to defer.</p> <p><b><u>PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JANUARY 9, 2025:</u></b> On a motion made by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to initiate ZTA #2024-00010 as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 5 to 0 with Commissioner Ramirez and Vice Chair McMahon absent.</p> <p>On a motion made by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of ZTA #2024-00010 as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 5 to 0 with Commissioner Ramirez and Vice Chair McMahon absent.</p> <p><b><u>Reason:</u></b>            The Planning Commission agreed with staff analysis and recommended the addition of the following language to section 9-202:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(A) <i>Waiver of requirement by special use permit.</i> 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The special use permit applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed signage would correspond with the intent of this Article IX and</li> <li>(2) City council finds that:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The proposed signage has an exceptional design or approach that cannot be accomplished within the existing regulations;</li> <li>(b) The proposed signage will not have an adverse impact on the nearby neighborhood; and</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
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(c) The signs comply with the applicable standards for approval of a special use permit set forth in section 11-504.

Discussion: Commissioner Lyle generally spoke in support of the text amendment with the addition of including the existing SUP waiver to any requirement of the sign ordinance. She explained there may be future unique signs or other emerging technology that are not covered by the proposed regulations. She felt that an option for a waiver from any of the sign ordinance requirements should be available.

Chair Macek asked staff why this section was removed.

Staff explained the proposed changes would limit the ability for applicants to seek approval for signs that did not comply with the sign ordinance. The proposed administrative SUP process would only allow for increases in the number, size, and height of signs; extensions on time limits for temporary signs; and digital signs. Staff proposed only these administrative SUPs because they reflected the types of requests that had been approved by City Council with previous sign SUPs. Staff explained that signs not meeting the administrative SUP standards for approval could be docketed for public hearings.

Chair Macek supported the text amendment and agreed with Commissioner Lyle that an option for a waiver to any requirement should be included in the sign ordinance for exceptional signs.

Commissioner Koenig found staff's proposal to be a significant improvement and agreed with adding in the waiver option as suggested by Commissioner Lyle. In addition, he appreciated the public comment relating to dark skies and noted this should be a larger City-wide discussion about nighttime illumination.

Commissioner Brown spoke in support of the proposal. He appreciated staff's efforts to create a more objective SUP process but ultimately supported Commissioner Lyle's inclusion of the existing SUP waiver for signs.

Speakers:

Melissa Kuennen supported the changes but had concerns about how illuminated signs would affect dark skies.

## **I. Summary**

Staff proposes amendments to the City's sign regulations. With these amendments, staff intends to improve organization and usability, reduce complexity, and increase flexibility of the sign regulations. Overall, while staff proposes significant reformatting and reorganization, most of the proposal reflects incremental changes to the existing regulations. The following list includes a high-level summary of staff's proposed amendments:

- (A) Create, amend, and delete terms and concepts to improve usability, reduce complexity, and eliminate redundancies with other Zoning Ordinance provisions, City policies, and the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- (B) Reorder sections to improve organization and for consistency with other Zoning Ordinance Articles.
- (C) Increase the maximum number, size, and height allowances for minor freestanding, wall, and temporary signs on properties with commercial, mixed, or multi-unit residential (with more than four units) uses.
- (D) Allow digital signs with administrative use permit approval.
- (E) Delete Coordinated Sign Special Use Permit (SUP) and general SUP for waiver of sign regulations. Create administrative SUP process. Eliminate SUP requirement for illuminated signs above 35 feet.

Staff's recommendations would not affect whether approval would be needed from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) for signs located within the City's Historic Districts. Nor would the changes affect the BAR's approval criteria. Further, staff's proposed changes may have limited impact to sites governed by Development Special Use Permits (DSUP), Development Site Plans (DSP), and other City Council approvals. In these cases, any new signs would have to be reviewed for consistency with all previous approval terms or conditions.

## **II. Background**

### *History*

Sign regulations were first established in the City with the 1951 Zoning Ordinance. Over the last 70 years, City Council has approved numerous amendments to the City's sign regulations. The last significant change occurred on May 14, 2016, when City Council approved a comprehensive update to the sign regulations. Originally, staff proposed these amendments to address signs in the public right-of-way and pole signs. The amendment evolved to respond to the United States Supreme Court decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* that changed how municipalities could regulate signs. The outcome of the decision is that sign ordinances should be content neutral, resulting in the regulation of signs based on time, manner, and place considerations.

### *Rationale for proposed text amendment*

Staff was directed by Planning Commission in March 2022 to study whether the City's sign regulations should continue to prohibit digital signs. City Council and other City departments also requested studying whether digital signs should be permitted at school sites and in conjunction with electric vehicle (EV) chargers.

Staff then decided to study a more comprehensive revision of the sign regulations. At work sessions with the Planning Commission in 2023 and earlier this year, staff provided updates on the

sign regulation efforts and received affirmative feedback on staff’s recommended policy directions.

City Council last approved a significant update to the sign ordinance in May 2016. Between May 2016 and now, City Council reviewed 29 sign-related SUP requests. All but one of these requests were approved. Given this, and the fact that the signs approved with these requests have existed without impacts to their surroundings, staff proposes changing the sign regulations to allow some of these signs without SUP approval. These changes would reduce staff time and cost to applicants without negative impacts.

*Table 1 – Sign SUPs from May 2016 to present*

<b>Address</b>	<b>SUP Approval</b>
2800 Shirlington Road	Illuminated sign >35 feet
66 Canal Center Plaza	Illuminated sign >35 feet
901 North Fairfax Street	Increase sign area to 1:2
300 South Pickett Street	Increase sign area to 1:2
	Sign above roofline
2000 North Beauregard Street	Additional freestanding signs
300 Montgomery Street	Increase sign area to 1:1.2
1460 North Beauregard Street	Increase size of freestanding signs
	Additional freestanding signs
935 North Van Dorn Street	Increase size of freestanding signs
1400 North Beauregard Street	Additional freestanding signs
5411-A Sheffield Court	Increase size of freestanding signs
5797 Rayburn Avenue	Additional freestanding signs
	Increase size of freestanding signs
3601 Potomac Avenue	Illuminated sign >35 feet
	Increased sign area to 1:1.5
	Window signs up to 25%
	Digital signs
2412 Richmond Highway	Illuminated sign >35 feet
1511 North Quaker Lane	Increase sign area to 1:1.5
3541 West Braddock Road	Increase size of freestanding sign
	Allow prohibited sign
4898 West Braddock Road	Increase sign area to 1:1.5
1310 Braddock Place	Illuminated sign >35 feet
2424 Mill Road	Illuminated sign >35 feet
	Increase sign ratio to 1:2
1737 King Street	Increase projecting sign size
2501 & 2601 Oakville Street	Illuminated sign >35 feet
	Increase sign area to 1:1.5
5901 Stevenson Avenue	Increase size of freestanding sign
	Waive freestanding sign setback requirement

5801 Duke Street	Digital signs
	Illuminated sign >35 feet
	Increase size of freestanding signs
	Increase sign area to 1:2
	Window signs up to 25%
3601 Richmond Highway	Digital sign
3701 Mount Vernon Avenue	Digital sign
1033 West Glebe Road	Allow freestanding sign on lot less than 100 feet wide
5050 Mark Center Drive	Increase sign area to 1:2
4800 Fillmore Avenue	Increase size of freestanding sign
2000 Mount Vernon Avenue	Allow prohibited sign
701 South Van Dorn Street	Increase sign area to 1:2

Staff experience in applying the ordinance since it was last updated in 2016 also showed a need for easier to understand regulations. The current sign regulations are organized into multilevel lists as shown in Figure 1, below.

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 9-202(A)ii.1.b or in sections 9-201(A)iii.6 or 9-201(A)iii.7.
- b. 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 is actively marketed and advertised for sale or actively marketed and advertised for rent. 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 9-202(A)ii.1.a or in sections 9-201(A)iii.6 or 9-201(A)iii.7.

*Figure 1 – Sign regulations*

This type of organization makes it very difficult to cite. For example, to direct someone to the regulations permitted for a temporary sign, the citation would be Zoning Ordinance section 9-202(A)ii.1.b.. A further complication is that additional temporary signs are also permitted by section 9-204 but no reference to this section is made. The sign regulations are also very prescriptive about the permitted locations for signs on buildings. There are several examples of concepts like this throughout the ordinance. One specific example is that projecting signs are only permitted at the entrance of a building, and despite being wall mounted, have their own set of size and height limitations. In general, the proposed regulations will make the regulations clearer and more concise.

### III. Discussion of Proposed Text Changes

Staff recommendations are as follows:

(A) *Create, amend, and delete terms and concepts to improve usability, reduce complexity, and eliminate redundancies with other Zoning Ordinance provisions, City policies, and the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).*

#### Sections 4-1409 – Public art, 4-1410 – Signs, and 6-605 – Signs.

- Revise provisions in the NR/Neighborhood retail (Arlandria) and Mount Vernon Avenue urban overlay zones. These sections contain standards that are challenging to enforce such as Section 4-1410(A)(3) which reads “unique, creative signs are strongly encouraged.” In addition, several regulations listed in these sections are redundant to Article IX, such as Section 4-1410(A)(6) which prohibits internally illuminated box signs, which are already prohibited City-wide.

#### Sections 2-106 and 9-201 – Definitions.

- Consolidate sign types into four general categories: freestanding, portable, temporary, or wall:
  - Freestanding signs would include any sign not attached to a building including monument signs.
  - Portable signs would include any freestanding sign not attached to the ground, like A-frame and sandwich board signs.
  - Temporary signs would include any sign that is displayed for a finite time period like banners and yard signs typically made of paper, cardboard, canvas, or similar.
  - Wall signs would include any sign attached to a building wall like projecting, awning, and marquee signs.
- Consolidate definitions of prohibited moving signs. A moving sign would include any sign with moving parts. The terms “animated sign” and “feather sign” would be deleted and these sign types would be considered moving signs.
- Delete definitions that are not used: this includes advertising structure, building frontage, changeable copy sign, comprehensive sign plan, curb sign, double-face sign, holiday display, illegal sign, minor sign, mobile sign, neon sign, nonconforming sign, public area, public art, and roof line.
- Remove limitations from digital sign definition and relocate into new section.
- Define internally illuminated rectangular panel sign.
- Clarify that signs on parapet walls are wall signs, not roof signs.
- Revise language to improve clarity and conciseness.

#### Section 9-103 – Sign approval.

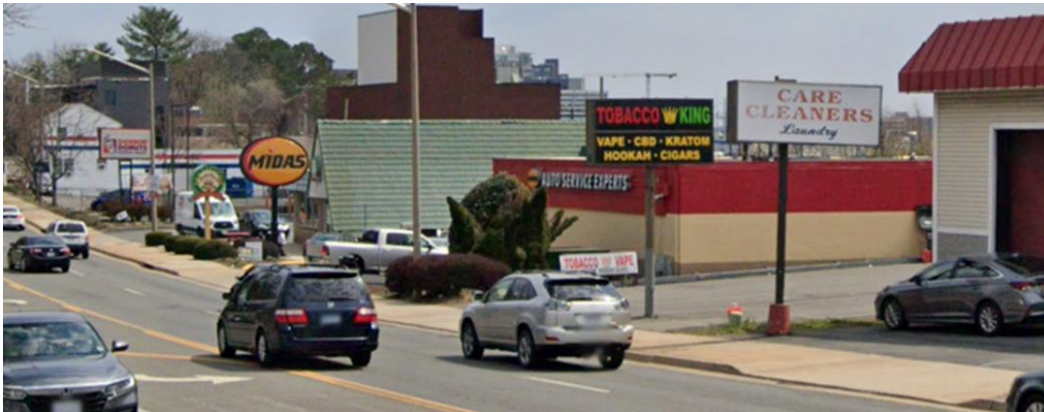
- Delete 9-103(A)(1) and (2). The Department of Code Administration is responsible for enforcing the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and determining when a permit is required. So, this reference in the Zoning Ordinance is not necessary.
- Delete 9-103(A)(3) as signs must comply with the sign ordinance regardless of whether the USBC requires a permit.
- Delete 9-103(B). This section is redundant to other sections of the sign ordinance.

Section 9-200 – Permitted signs.

- Delete painted curb signs, signs at entrances to neighborhoods, and signs “at locations within ten feet of the curb edge of a parking lot or driveway only at intersections or areas where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to turn or change their course of travel” from permitted signs. These sign types are either not permitted because they would be located in the public right-of-way (curb signs) or would be allowed as freestanding signs under the proposed regulations.
- Delete projecting signs from permitted signs as these would be permitted as wall signs under staff’s proposal.

Section 9-402 – Nonconforming signs.

Currently, any pole signs over six feet in height are prohibited. Existing pole signs constructed prior to the implementation of the pole sign prohibition in 2016 are nonconforming. At the time, the prohibition included a sunset provision which requires eventual removal of the sign. Staff revisited this provision given concerns of the removal costs and the potential burden to business and property owners throughout the City. Staff recommends continuing the pole signs prohibition but deleting the sunset provision. The proposed regulations state that a pole sign may not be replaced should it be significantly damaged, deteriorated, or removed, but that it may otherwise remain indefinitely. Examples of pole signs are shown in Figure 2, below.



*Figure 2 – Pole signs along Duke Street*

*(B) Reorder sections to improve organization and for consistency with other Zoning Ordinance Articles. Organize regulations into tables.*

Various sections

Staff proposes general reorganization of Article IX to improve flow and more closely mirror the layout of other Zoning Ordinance sections. Staff also proposes deleting the narrative format of sections 9-201, 9-202, 9-203, and 9-204 and replacing it with a more user-friendly table format. Organizing the sign regulations into tables would make them easier to read and apply.

Staff also proposes changing the organization of the sign ordinance, from being applied based on both zone and use of a property to being based on the property’s use. This will meet the purpose and intent of the ordinance, while acknowledging that larger properties and properties with multiples uses require more signage due to the greater public interaction with those properties. For

instance, this would allow signage may to assist with the navigation and locating uses on a a given property.

*(C) Increase maximum number, size, and height allowances for minor freestanding, wall, and temporary signs on properties with commercial, mixed, or multi-unit residential (with more than four units) uses. Eliminate setbacks for freestanding signs.*

Section 9-201(A) – Permitted signs on a lot containing a single unit, two unit, or multi-unit up to four-unit use.

Staff recommends changes only to the temporary sign regulations applicable to single-unit, two-unit, and multi-unit up to four-unit residential uses as follows:

*Temporary signs*

Staff proposes relocating the additional temporary sign allowance, provided by section 9-204, into section 9-201(A). Section 9-204 currently allows additional temporary signs on any property. Staff also recommends standardizing the amount of time most temporary signs can be displayed to 120 days with 30-day interruptions between display periods.

Section 9-201(B) – Permitted signs on a lot containing a non-residential, multi-unit with more than four units, and mixed uses.

Staff recommends changes to freestanding, wall, and temporary sign regulations. In general, staff's proposed changes would allow some of the signs which required SUP approval to be allowed by-right. See Table 1 above for a list of SUPs.

*Freestanding signs*

The current sign regulations establish strict regulations for freestanding signs. One 32 square foot freestanding sign is permitted on lots that are at least 100 feet wide, have off-street parking spaces or provide "drive-in" service, and have buildings that provide at least a 25-foot front or side yard setback. If the property contains three or more businesses, the maximum size increases to 40 square feet.

Lots wider than 200 feet are permitted an additional freestanding sign and both signs can be 40 square feet each. They must be installed as monument signs, located "along a property's frontage" and provide at least a 10-foot front setback.

Staff recommends retaining the monument sign requirement, the maximum number, size, and height regulations as well as the prohibition of freestanding signs on lots less than 100 feet wide. Staff also recommends deletion of all the other prescriptive requirements.

More than half of the sign SUPs approved by City Council required exceptions from the current freestanding sign requirements. These approvals help to demonstrate that some of these requirements are no longer necessary to protect against potential impacts.

*Minor freestanding signs*

The current regulations allow a variety of minor signs with varying maximum numbers, heights, and sizes, depending on the location of the sign and the size of the lot. Staff proposes consolidating



the current sign regulations for minor signs and signs “at locations within ten feet of the curb edge of a parking lot or driveway only at intersections or areas where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to turn or change their course of travel” as simply minor signs. Staff proposes allowing the same number of minor signs (five per 100 feet of lot width), at the same maximum height as the current regulations, but to increase the size limit from one square foot to four square feet. In addition, staff proposes allowing an additional five minor signs per 100 feet of lot width if the signs are setback more than 20 feet from a front lot line. Each sign would be permitted to have a sign area of eight square feet and height of six feet.

*Wall signs*

Currently, the sign regulations permit one square foot of wall signage for every one square foot of the width of the building wall. For example, if a building wall is 40 feet wide, then the sign area allowed on that wall is 40 square feet. Consistently, City Council has approved SUPs to increase the ratio of 1:1 to 1:1.5, including signage at Landmark, Inova, Carlyle Crossing, and Potomac Yard. Staff is unaware of any impacts resulting from the signs that have been constructed since these approvals. In addition, the increase in wall sign allowance would be comparable with nearby jurisdictions, as shown in Table 3.

*Table 3 – Wall sign area regulations in nearby jurisdictions*

	Sign ratio
Arlington	1:2
Montgomery County	1:2
Fairfax County	1:1.5

Based on the foregoing, staff recommends an increase in wall sign allowance from 1:1 to 1:1.5.



*Figure 3: Examples comparing wall sign increase. Left image shows existing 1:1 ratio, right image represents signage with 1:5 ratio*

*Wall signs on buildings 40 feet or taller*

The current sign regulations allow buildings taller than 20 feet to have more sign area but state that these additional signs must be located at least 20 feet above grade. Staff proposes deletion of this provision and replacing it with a maximum sign area ratio of 1:2 for buildings taller than 40 feet. This would allow more flexibility in sign placement and sizing for tall buildings. A need for flexibility, again, has been established for this change based on the sign SUP approval history.

*Temporary signs*

Staff also proposes relocating the additional temporary sign allowance, provided by section 9-204, into section 9-201(B). Additionally, staff recommends allowing freestanding temporary signs on lots developed with non-residential uses as they are already permitted on lots developed with residential uses.

*(D) Allow digital signs with administrative use permit approval*

The sign regulations currently prohibit digital signs except for those associated with fuel pricing signs at gas stations or with SUP approval. During the last re-write in 2016, a change to the digital sign prohibition was studied but was ultimately retained. At the time, staff noted that an on-going study of digital sign policy would be needed as technology evolved. Since 2016, City Council has approved four SUPs to allow digital signs. At the hearings for these cases, Planning Commission and City Council discussed the potential of allowing digital signs by-right with limitations such as timing, restricting animation, quality of imagery, and brightness.

Staff researched nearby communities that currently allow digital signs and determined what their restrictions were. These restrictions are shown in Table 2, below.

*Table 2 – Digital sign regulations in nearby jurisdictions*

	Restrictions
Fairfax County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed as freestanding sign; limited to 50% of the maximum allowable sign area</li> <li>• Image can change every 8 seconds</li> <li>• Background cannot be white, off-white, gray, or yellow</li> <li>• Brightness must be controlled automatically by ambient light sensors</li> </ul>
Arlington County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No effects of movement, flashing or similar effects in individual images</li> <li>• Image can change once a minute</li> <li>• Brightness must be controlled automatically by ambient light sensors</li> <li>• Cannot be placed above 40 feet</li> <li>• Only allowed in specified zones</li> <li>• Cannot face certain residential zones</li> </ul>
Montgomery County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image can change once every 30 seconds.</li> </ul>
Loudoun County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only operated during the hours of operation of the establishment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image can change every six seconds</li> <li>• No movement, flashing, or varying light intensity</li> <li>• Brightness must be controlled automatically by ambient light sensors</li> <li>• Size restrictions depending on wall versus freestanding and zone</li> </ul>
Richmond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image can change every six seconds</li> <li>• Illumination cannot shine onto other properties</li> </ul>

Staff recommends removing the prohibition on digital signs and allowing them with administrative SUP approval. Staff believes that digital signs would likely have similar impacts to illuminated signs which are currently widely permitted throughout the City; however, given that digital signs have moving images or dynamic content and are an evolving technology, staff recommends that they only be permitted with administrative SUP approval. These SUPs would be subject to the following 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.

These limitations ensure that digital signs would not be overly bright or distracting. As digital sign prevalence expands and technology continues to evolve, staff will continue evaluate whether the City’s digital sign regulations continue to provide reasonable flexibility and mitigates potential impacts.

*(E) Delete Coordinated Sign Special Use Permit (SUP) and general SUP for waiver of sign regulations. Create administrative SUP process. Eliminate SUP requirement for illuminated signs above 35 feet.*

Currently, a SUP can be requested to create a coordinated sign program, essentially replacing the existing sign regulations with site-specific standards. City Council must approve these standards and can approve the SUP if it is determined that the sign standards would provide “...the same or greater benefits to the public as the sign regulations otherwise applicable.” A SUP may also be sought to waive any of the sign regulations based on the following criteria.

- (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.

Staff proposes deleting these SUP provisions and creating a new administrative SUP process. This new process would allow only the following signs with administrative SUP approval and pursuant to section 11-513 (the Zoning Ordinance's existing administrative SUP provisions):

- (A) Any signs which exceed the maximum permitted number, height or sign area;
- (B) Temporary signs posted for more than 120 days without interruption; and
- (C) Digital signs.

Staff's proposal would limit the types of SUP requests that could be sought. Again, the existing sign regulations allow SUP approval to be sought to waive any of the regulations. Under staff's proposal, SUPs could only be sought from specified sign regulations.

Staff believes that certain site features, configurations, and sizes could accommodate signs that exceed sign allowances without causing impacts. To address these circumstances, staff proposes the following standards for administrative SUPs:

- (1) All signs and sign structures shall comply with the height regulations of the zone in which they are located;
- (2) Signs must be located on a site that has one or more of the following:
  - (a) A lot size of 15,000 square feet or more;
  - (b) Three or more businesses;
  - (c) Frontage on more than one street; or
  - (d) Frontage exceeding 400 feet
- (3) For temporary signs only, the administrative special use permit approval shall expire two years from the date of approval;
- (4) The wall sign area ratio, including temporary signs, shall not exceed 1:2;
- (5) The sign is not a prohibited sign pursuant to section 9-203.
- (6) The number of freestanding signs shall not exceed the maximum number permitted by more than 50 percent. If no freestanding signs are permitted pursuant to section 9-200, no more than one freestanding sign shall be permitted with administrative special use permit approval.
- (7) The freestanding sign shall not have a sign area or height of more than one-third larger than the maximum sign area and taller than the height otherwise permitted;
- (8) Digital signs must comply with the following:
  - (a) Signs shall comply with the illumination limitations in section 9-204(A);
  - (b) Text, graphics, and images shall not be animated, move, or flash;
  - (c) Digital signs shall have an automatic photocell dimmer; and
  - (d) The changing of text or graphics shall occur no more than two times per minute.

Staff believes that these revised standards provide a more efficient review of sign SUPs than the existing processes while protecting against potential impacts and upholding the purposes of the sign regulations.

Staff also recommends removal of the SUP requirement for illuminated signs over 35 feet. To date, City Council has approved every one of these requests. The current restrictions for all illuminated signs regarding glare would continue to apply and signs facing or abutting residential properties must not be illuminated between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. Illuminated signs over 35 feet would continue to be prohibited within historic districts or facing the George Washington Parkway.

#### **IV. Outreach and feedback**

Outreach for the sign ordinance update began in May 2023 with a work session with Planning Commission. At the work session, staff discussed potential updates to the sign ordinance, including regulations related to portable signs in the right-of-way and digital signs. That same month staff attended a meeting with City business associations to introduce the study and solicit feedback. Over the following months, staff heard from a few community members about concerns regarding changes to the sign regulations in the historic districts. Due to other priorities, namely Zoning for Housing, sign ordinance efforts were briefly suspended until the following year. Staff reinitiated the sign ordinance update by holding a hybrid community meeting at City Hall, a second work session with Planning Commission, and an information session with the Board of Architectural Review in April 2024. At these meetings, staff presented potential policy directions and held discussions with board members. Staff also attended a meeting with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to discuss the potential changes, namely portable signs within the public right of way. Last month, staff was invited to and attended a meeting with the National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP) to provide a similar presentation and discussion.

In December, staff released the proposed draft changes and subsequently held virtual open houses on December 16, 17, 19, and 20. Staff also held an additional hybrid community meeting at the Del Pepper Community Center on December 18. Project information has been active on the City website since April of this year. Staff also sent eNews notifications and emails directly to civic and business associations to announce meetings and provide updates.

Throughout the outreach process, staff received concerns about the impact of the changes on the historic districts, the impact of digital and portable signs, concerns that temporary yard signs would be allowed in the public right of way, and how illuminated signs create light pollution impacts.

While the sign ordinance applies City-wide, all signs located within the Old and Historic Alexandria District and Parker Gray District would continue to be subject to Section 9-300, which require all signs to be reviewed by the Board of Architectural Review for a certificate of appropriateness and are required to meet the design guidelines for these districts.

Originally, staff proposed digital signs to be allowed wherever illuminated signs were permitted. However, after receiving concerns about potential impacts, staff ultimately recommended allowing digital signs in certain circumstances with an administrative special use permit.

Given the approval history for illuminated signs above 35 feet, staff does not believe that a prohibition only for illuminated signs would be appropriate despite concerns about light pollution. Staff believes a City-wide study of all sources that cause light pollution would be a more appropriate direction to address these concerns more effectively.

Staff proposes retaining the current prohibition on signs in the right-of-way. After discussion with Transportation and Environmental Services staff, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and feedback from community members, portable signs continue to pose impacts including clutter, liability, and impediments to foot and sidewalk traffic. Portable signs would continue to be permitted on private property with the existing restrictions. Staff would, however, like to note the

feedback received from businesses and business associations who stressed the importance of these portable signs to display sales, events, and other information.

**IV. Recommendation**

Staff recommends initiation and approval of the proposed text amendment.

Staff: Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief  
Rachel Drescher, Urban Planner  
Sam Shelby, Principal Planner

Attachments: Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Language

## ARTICLE II – DEFINITIONS

### Sec. 2-100 – Definitions

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#### 2-106 – ~~Reserved. Advertising structure.~~

~~Any sign or other object or structure serving primarily for advertising purposes, independent of any other structure.~~

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### Sec. 4-1400 – NR/Neighborhood retail zone (Arlandria).

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#### 4-1409 - ~~Reserved. Public art.~~

~~Public art is strongly encouraged in NR zone in order to create a sense of place for the community and to enhance the gateways into the neighborhood and the city. Public art provides many benefits, creates connections between the community and the built environment, and a sense of orientation and animation within the district. Public art may include sculpture, murals, fountains, and other similar features. For the purposes of this section, a mural shall not be considered a sign so long as it does not include advertisement for any business, organization or product.~~

- ~~(A) In order to provide a more meaningful experience and greater interpretation of the art, consideration should be given to relating public art features with each other to the extent possible;~~
- ~~(B) Public art located on public property shall be reviewed by the city commission for the arts and approved by the city council.~~

#### 4-1410 – ~~Reserved. Signs.~~

~~Storefront signs should contribute to the overall look and theme of the neighborhood and be compatible with the architecture style and details of the building. Signs should be attractive, uncluttered, and not overpowering to the building facade.~~

~~The sign provisions of article IX shall generally apply; however, notwithstanding any conflicting provisions in article IX, the following are applicable in the NR zone:~~

- ~~(A) — The design of signs shall be incorporated into the overall design of the structure and the site, consistent with the following principles identified in the currently adopted Mount Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines as determined by the director of planning and zoning:
  - ~~(1) — Simple, readable signs that incorporate the name "Arlandria," or its Spanish equivalent, and theme of "family" are strongly encouraged. Signs consisting of individual letters mounted to the building facade are encouraged;~~
  - ~~(2) — Signs should be centered on the building facade, or over the entrance door to the business;~~
  - ~~(3) — Unique, creative signs are strongly encouraged;~~~~

- ~~(4) — Sign materials shall include durable wood, painted plastics, metals, or pre-fabricated pin mounted letters;~~
- ~~(5) — Signs projecting from the building wall at a 90 degree angle are encouraged to identify a business to pedestrians on the sidewalk, or to those traveling parallel to the storefront;~~
- ~~(6) — Internally lit plastic box signs or flashing signs are prohibited;~~
- ~~(7) — Where a building includes multiple commercial units, the sign for each unit should be of uniform character and location;~~
- ~~(8) — Awnings are strongly encouraged and should be designed to coordinate with the design of the building and any other awnings along the same block face. Any sign located on an awning shall be fixed flat to the surface, and shall be non-illuminated.~~
- ~~(B) — In order to retain the existing noncomplying roof signs that provide uniqueness and a sense of history in Arlandria, the following provision applies as specified:
  - ~~(1) — Roof mounted signs, existing as of January 1, 2003, shall be permitted to remain; however, no enlargement or relocation of those signs shall be permitted. Routine maintenance of the signs and structural repairs as necessary to maintain the integrity of the signs shall be permitted. Limited alteration to allow a name change for the business shall be permitted so long as the new lettering is the same type style, size, scale and theme as the existing lettering. No alteration of the structure is permitted.~~~~
- ~~(C) — Notwithstanding the provisions of [section 9-104\(F\)](#) of the zoning ordinance, vertical banners may be installed on the light poles located in the public right-of-way as a coordinated banner program subject to review and approval by the director of planning and zoning. Banners shall be coordinated to promote a unified identity for Arlandria, an upcoming event or season, but shall not identify or promote individual businesses or products. Such banners shall be securely affixed at the top and bottom so as to preclude any fluttering or rotation by the movement of the atmosphere;~~
- ~~(D) — Umbrellas displayed in conjunction with outdoor dining areas must be free of any advertising or wording;~~
- ~~(E) — Free standing signs are hereby prohibited; however, one ground mounted, monument style center identification sign may be permitted on sites developed with shopping centers that have more than 20,000 square feet of lot area. The total area of shopping center identification signs shall not exceed 50 square feet with a maximum height of 8 feet. The center identification sign shall display only the name and address of the center. No other ground mounted signs shall be permitted.~~

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Sec. 6-600 – Mount Vernon Avenue urban overlay zone.

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6-605 – Reserved. Signs.



The provisions of article IX of this ordinance shall apply within the overlay zone the following additions and modifications:

- (A) ~~Sign designs compatible with Mount Vernon Avenue.~~ The following sign types are permitted:
  - (1) ~~Sign type.~~ All signs shall be wall-mounted, projecting signs, glass applied or located on the valance of an awning;
  - (2) ~~Sign location.~~ All signs shall be located below second floor windows;
  - (3) ~~Awnings.~~ Awnings shall be designed to coordinate with the design of the building. Awnings shall not be internally illuminated. Light fixtures mounted to the building wall to illuminate the building or sidewalk are permitted.
- (B) ~~Prohibited signs on Mount Vernon Avenue.~~ The following specific sign types are prohibited:
  - (1) ~~Freestanding signs, exceeding six square feet in size and six feet in height. Except that such freestanding signs existing on \_\_\_\_\_ (date of adoption) may be replaced on a one-time basis with a monument sign not to exceed eight feet in height. Any such replacement signs, shall be deemed a noncomplying structure, subject to section 12-100, and shall not be subject to the conditions of section 6-605(C).~~
  - (2) ~~Signs with internal illumination.~~
  - (3) ~~Box signs hung perpendicular to a building wall.~~
- (C) ~~Noncomplying status.~~ Any signs existing on \_\_\_\_\_ (date of adoption) that are inconsistent with the requirements of sections 6-605(A) and (B) shall be subject to the following restrictions: such signs may not be physically expanded, enlarged or intensified; such signs must be removed if the use existing on \_\_\_\_\_ (date of adoption) to which it is accessory ceases operation, or if the use of the sign is abandoned for a period of 12 months. No change of sign face or message shall be permitted for a sign deemed noncomplying under this section.

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## ARTICLE IX – SIGNS

Sec. 9-100 – General provisions.

9-101 – Findings, purpose, interpretation, and intent; ~~interpretation~~.

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- (G) This ~~article~~ Article IX governs the erection and display of all signs, ~~marquees and awnings~~ in the City, except those erected and displayed by the City, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the United States in furtherance of their governmental responsibilities, and those required by law to be erected and displayed, ~~and public art~~.

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- (K) This article shall apply to signs, ~~marquees, and awnings~~ on property not used for public right-of-way. Under no circumstances shall any provision herein authorize placement of a sign on any public right-of-way.
- (L) Wherever this article permits a sign with commercial content, non-commercial content is also permitted subject to the same requirements of size, color, illumination, movement, materials, location, height and construction.

9-102 – Definitions.

- (A) ~~A frame sign. A two faced sign with supports that are connected at the top and separated at the base, forming an "A" shape. These are also referred to as "sandwich board" signs. They are included in the term "portable sign."~~
- (B) ~~Animated sign. Any sign, the character or appearance of any element or part of which changes by any device, mechanical, electrical or otherwise, except for digital text and graphic signs.~~
- (C) ~~Awning. Any permanent or retractable structure projecting beyond a building wall at an entrance to a building or extending along and projecting beyond the building's wall and generally designed and constructed to provide protection against the weather. This structure consists of a flexible material covering attached to and supported by a metal frame.~~
- (D) ~~Awning sign. Any sign attached to and made a part of an awning or any similar projections from a building, with changeable, fixed or both types of lettering in use.~~
- (E) ~~Banner. A temporary sign of flexible material affixed to a framework or flat surface.~~
- (F) ~~Billboard. Any sign that consists of a single panel surface larger than 100 square feet in size that is installed as an independent structure or is mounted on the side or top of a building, and this sign along with its location is sold, rented, or leased to a user that is not the property's business owner.~~
- (G) ~~Building frontage. The length of the main wall of a building which physically encloses or covers usable space. Said frontage shall be measured at the width of the wall at the height where the sign is mounted.~~
- (H) ~~Chalk board sign. A single faced, framed slate, chalk board, whiteboard, or other material that can be written on with chalk, dry erase or similar markers.~~
- (I) ~~Changeable copy sign. A non-electronic sign or part of a sign that is designed so that characters, letters or illustrations can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or surface of the sign.~~
- (J) ~~Comprehensive sign plan. A plan for the signage of a property that includes multiple tenants or owners with shared parking or other facilities.~~
- (K) ~~Curb sign. Any sign painted on a curb.~~
- (L) ~~Digital text and graphic sign. Any sign that can change its content by way of electronic or mechanical means but maintains a consistent image and does not flash or display any animation or movement other than the occasional changing of text or graphics occurring~~

- no more than two times per day. Digital text and graphic signs can be in the form of televisions, monitors, and other screens.
- (M) ~~*Double face sign.* Any sign having two parallel planes or surfaces that both bear the message.~~
  - (N) ~~*Feather sign.* A lightweight, portable sign mounted along one edge on a single, vertical, flexible pole the physical structure of which at may resemble a sail, bow, or teardrop. See windblown sign.~~
  - (O) ~~*Flag.* A piece of cloth or similar material, shaped like a pennant, rectangle, or square, attachable by one straight edge to a pole or rope or attached at the top and draped.~~
  - (P) ~~*Flashing sign.* Any sign consisting of, or illuminated by, flashing or intermittent lights or other lights of changing degrees of intensity, brightness or color except for digital text and graphic signs.~~
  - (Q) ~~*Freestanding sign.* A sign that is supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground and independent of any support from any building or wall. It also means any non-portable sign supported by a fence, retaining wall, or by upright structural members or braces on or in the ground and not attached to a building. A freestanding sign can have one or two sides and can have messages on each side.~~
  - (R) ~~*Height.* The maximum vertical distance from the ground at the base of the sign, or, for projecting signs, at the bottom of the plane created by the face of the sign extending to the ground, to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Height also measures the ground clearance under projecting signs.~~
  - (S) ~~*Holiday displays.* Any displays erected on a seasonal basis in observance of religious, national, or state holidays which are not intended to be permanent in nature and which contain no advertising material~~
  - (T) ~~*Illegal sign.* Any sign erected without a required permit or which otherwise does not comply with any provisions of this article.~~
  - (U) ~~*Illuminated sign.* Any sign that is backlit, internally lighted, or lighted by direct external lighting fixtures.~~
  - (V) ~~*Marquee.* Any permanent structure projecting beyond a building wall at an entrance to a building or extending along and projecting beyond the building's wall and generally designed and constructed to provide protection against the weather. A marquee may take the form of an awning.~~
  - (W) ~~*Marquee sign.* Any sign attached to and made a part of a marquee or any similar projections from a building, with manually changeable, fixed or both types of lettering in use.~~
  - (X) ~~*Minor sign.* Any wall or freestanding sign not exceeding one (1) square foot in area and not illuminated.~~
  - (Y) ~~*Monument sign.* Any freestanding sign consisting of a structure built on grade in which the sign and the structure are an integral part of one another. A monument sign is not a pole sign, and it does not have any visible supporting posts or poles under the sign area. This sign generally has a low profile in accordance with height restrictions for this sign type~~

with little or no open space between the ground and the sign and has a structure constructed of masonry, wood, or materials similar in appearance.

- (Z) ~~*Moving or windblown sign.* Any sign, any element or part of which (such as a streamer, wheel, moored blimp or propeller) moves by means of a mechanized, electrical, or other device or is set in motion by movement of the atmosphere, including feather signs. A flag is not a moving or windblown sign.~~
- (AA) ~~*Mobile sign.* Any sign mounted on wheels, built with axles to which wheels may be attached, or attached to a motor vehicle which is used primarily for the displaying of the sign, not for operating of the vehicle. Any such vehicle shall, without limitation, be considered to be used for the primary purpose of displaying the sign if it remains parked in the same location for more seven days without moving. fails to display current license plates, inspection sticker, or municipal decal, if the vehicle is inoperable, if evidence of paid to date local taxes cannot be made available, or if the sign alters the standard design of such vehicle or trailer. A parking permit sticker, inspection sticker, regulatory permit or bumper sticker attached to a motor vehicle shall not be considered a sign.~~
- (BB) ~~*Neon sign.* Any sign containing exposed tubes filled with light emitting gas or a sign giving the appearance of being a neon sign.~~
- (CC) ~~*Nonconforming sign.* Any sign which was lawfully erected in compliance with applicable regulations of the city and maintained prior to the effective date of this chapter of the zoning ordinance and which fails to conform to current standards and restrictions of the zoning ordinance.~~
- (DD) ~~*Pole sign.* Any freestanding sign taller than six feet that is mounted on one or more visible, ground mounted poles. A flag, as defined by 9-102(N), on an affixed to a pole is not a pole sign.~~
- (EE) ~~*Portable sign.* Any temporary sign not affixed to a building, structure, vehicle or the ground and which can easily be picked up and moved to another location without the use of machinery.~~
- (FF) ~~*Projecting sign.* Any sign, other than a wall, awning or marquee sign, affixed to a building and supported only by the wall on which it is mounted. A projecting sign has a sign face that is not flat to the wall on which it is mounted and has two sides and can have messages on each side.~~
- (GG) ~~*Public area.* Any public place, public right of way, any parking area or right of way open to use by the general public, or any navigable body of water.~~
- (HH) ~~*Public art.* Items expressing creative skill or imagination in a visual form, such as painting or sculpture, which are intended to beautify or provide aesthetic influences to public areas or areas which are visible from the public realm.~~
- (II) ~~*Roof line.* A line composed of the highest points of the roof of a building or structure not to include mechanical penthouses or other structures attached to or erected on such roof.~~
- (JJ) ~~*Roof sign.* Any wall sign attached erected on or affixed to a building or structure which extends, in whole or in part, above the roof line or the eaves or bottom edge of the roof.~~

- (KK) *Sign.* An object, device, display structure, or part thereof, visible from a public place, a public right of way, any parking area or right of way open to use by the general public, or any navigable body of water which is designed and used to attract attention to an institution, organization, business, product, service, event, or location by any means involving words, letters, figures, designs, symbols, fixtures, logos, colors, illumination, or projected images. The term does not include flags of any nation, state, or other geopolitical entity not related to a commercial business, product or service. The term also does not include public art or architectural elements incorporated into the style or function of a building. The term "sign" also does not include the display of merchandise for sale on the site of the display.
- (LL) *Sign face.* The portion of a sign structure bearing the message.
- (MM) *Sign structure.* Any structure supporting or bearing a sign face.
- (NN) *Temporary sign.* Any sign intended to be displayed for a short time period based on a property condition. All temporary signs are not illuminated. Unless a different time period is specified, a temporary sign may not be displayed for more than 120 continuous days, and there must be a 30 day interruption between postings of temporary signs.
- (OO) *Wall sign.* Any sign attached to or painted on or against a flat vertical surface of a structure.
- (PP) *Window sign.* Any sign visible from outside a building and visible through any window or door and attached to or within four feet in front of or behind the surface of a window or door.
- (A) *Billboard.* Any sign that consists of a single panel surface larger than 100 square feet in size that is installed as an independent structure or is mounted on the side or top of a building, and this sign along with its location is sold, rented, or leased to a user that is not the property's business owner.
- (B) *Digital text and graphic sign.* Any sign that can change its content by way of electronic or mechanical means but maintains a consistent image and does not flash or display any animation or movement other than the occasional changing of text or graphics occurring no more than two times per day. Digital text and graphic signs include, but are not limited to, can be in the form of images projected onto a building, televisions, monitors, and other screens.
- (C) *Flag.* A piece of cloth or similar material, shaped like a pennant, rectangle, or square, attachable by one straight edge to a pole or rope or attached at the top and draped.
- (D) *Flashing sign.* Any sign consisting of, or illuminated by, flashing or intermittent lights or other lights of changing degrees of intensity, brightness or color except for digital text and graphic signs.
- (E) *Freestanding sign.* A sign that is supported by an independent structure and is not attached to a building or other structure. supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground and independent of any support from any building or wall. It also means any non-portable sign supported by a fence, or retaining wall, or by upright structural members or braces on or in the ground and not attached to a building. A freestanding sign can have one or two sides and can have messages on each side. Freestanding signs include, but are not limited to, monument signs, minor freestanding signs, and pole signs.

- (F) Freestanding sign, monument: A freestanding sign without visible supporting posts or poles under the sign face.
- (H) Height. The maximum vertical distance from the ground at the base of the sign, ~~or, for projecting signs, at the bottom of the plane created by the face of the sign extending to the ground,~~ to the top of the highest point of the sign or sign structure. ~~attached component of the sign. Height also measures the ground clearance under projecting signs.~~
- (I) Illuminated sign. Any sign that is backlit, internally lighted, or lighted by direct external lighting fixtures.
- (J) Internally illuminated panel sign. An illuminated sign with a light fixture inside a rectangular box with a translucent sign face.
- (K) Moving ~~or windblown~~ sign. Any sign, that has moving parts any element or part of which (such as a streamer, wheel, moored blimp or propeller) moves by means of a mechanized, electrical, or other device or is set in motion by movement of the atmosphere, including feather signs. A flag is not a moving ~~or windblown~~ sign.
- (L) Pole sign. Any freestanding sign taller than six feet that is mounted on one or more visible, ground-mounted poles. A flag, as defined by 9-102(CN), ~~on an~~ affixed to a pole is not a pole sign.
- (M) Portable sign. Any temporary, freestanding sign, including but not limited to A-frame signs not affixed to a building, structure, vehicle or the ground and which can easily be picked up and moved to another location without the use of machinery.
- (N) Roof sign. Any wall sign attached erected on or affixed to a building or structure which extends, in whole or in part, above the roof line or ~~the eaves or bottom edge of the roof,~~ or is located on a penthouse. The term "roof sign" shall not include a wall sign which is mounted on a parapet wall above the roof line and below the top of the parapet.
- (O) Sign. An object, device, display structure, or part thereof, visible to and designed to communicate information to persons in a public area ~~from a public place, a public right-of-way, any parking area or right of way open to use by the general public, or any navigable body of water which is designed and used to attract attention to an institution, organization, business, product, service, event, or location~~ by any means involving words, letters, figures, designs, symbols, fixtures, logos, colors, illumination, or projected images. A sign may have one or two faces and may have messages on each face. ~~The term does not include flags of any nation, state, or other geopolitical entity not related to a commercial business, product or service. The term also does not include public art or architectural elements incorporated into the style or function of a building. The term "sign" also does not include the display of merchandise for sale on the site of the display.~~
- (P) Sign face. The portion of a sign ~~structure~~ which contains words, letters, figures, designs, symbols, logos, or similar and any distinctive background, separate from the building or structure to which it is attached, containing these elements. ~~bearing the message.~~
- (Q) Sign area. The sum of the areas of the smallest rectangle around each individual word, figure, design, symbol, logo, or similar and any distinctive background, separate from the building, containing these elements. For freestanding signs, sign area shall not include the base of the sign and shall only include the area of one sign face.

- (R) Sign area ratio. The ratio of the building wall's width to the sign area.
- (S) Sign structure. Any structure supporting or bearing a sign face.
- (T) Temporary sign. ~~A sign intended to be displayed for a short period of time. Any sign intended to be displayed for a short time period based on a property condition. All temporary signs are not illuminated. Unless a different time period is specified, a temporary sign may not be displayed for more than 120 continuous days, and there must be a 30-day interruption between postings of temporary signs.~~
- (U) Wall sign. ~~Any sign attached to a building or painted on or against a flat vertical surface of a structure.~~
- (V) Window sign. ~~Any sign visible from outside a building and visible through any window or door and attached to or within four feet in front of or behind the surface of a window or door.~~

~~9-103 Sign approval.~~

~~(A) Approval required.~~

- ~~(1) No sign, marquee or awning may be erected, displayed, constructed, reconstructed or altered unless it complies with the Uniform Statewide Building Code. Compliance may require that, in addition to the permits required by any other section of this ordinance, a permit or permits be obtained from the building code official.~~
- ~~(2) Application for a permit shall be made on forms furnished by the building code official.~~
- ~~(3) The department of planning and zoning shall review each sign application except as noted in 9-103(B) below, for compliance with this Article IX.~~

~~(B) Zoning approval not required. In all zones, except property within the Old and Historic Alexandria or the Parker Gray Districts, the following signs are permitted without zoning approval if the sign is allowed in the zone pursuant to section 9-200 herein, however nothing in this section shall relieve the installer of the requirement to obtain applicable permissions pertaining to the building code in use by the City of Alexandria:~~

- ~~(1) Signs erected by a governmental body or required by law.~~
- ~~(2) Flags as allowed within each zone.~~
- ~~(3) The changing of messages on and/or maintenance of an existing sign, except that repair of a nonconforming sign must comply with 9-402.~~
- ~~(4) Temporary signs as allowed within each zone.~~
- ~~(5) Not more than two minor signs per property as allowed within each zone. Additional minor signs are permitted in certain districts with approval.~~
- ~~(6) Pavement markings on an area of property where traffic management is necessary.~~

~~(C) Coordinated sign special use permit. Comprehensive sign plans may be approved by special use permit in a CDD/Coordinated Development District, or in a unified development more than three acres in size, which contains more than one building, more~~

~~than one parcel or private streets. The comprehensive sign plan shall establish the time, manner, and placement of signs, frequency of message changes, the materials, the hours of lighting, the height of signs, the total number of square feet of sign surface, and the number of signs to be placed on a site. Height of signs shall not be modified above the height permitted in the zoning ordinance. The applicant for a coordinated sign special use permit shall submit a statement of justification for such program in addition to information which describes the number, location, size, height, clearance, color, material, type of illumination, if applicable, of all proposed signs within the program. A proposed coordinated sign program may be approved if council finds that it provides the same or greater benefits to the public as the sign regulations otherwise applicable.~~

~~(D) — Waiver of requirement by special use permit. A special use permit may be obtained pursuant to section 11-500, which authorizes the 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~~

~~9-104 — Prohibited signs.~~

~~In addition to signs prohibited elsewhere in the zoning ordinance, City Code or by applicable state or federal law, The following signs are prohibited in all zones:~~

~~General prohibitions:~~

~~(1) — Signs displayed without complying with all applicable regulations of this chapter or that violate any city, state or federal law.~~

~~(2) — Signs simulating, or which are likely to be confused with, a traffic control sign or any other sign displayed by a public authority. Any such sign is subject to immediate removal and disposal by an authorized city official as a nuisance.~~

~~(B) — *Prohibitions based on materials.*~~

~~(1) — Animated signs. This subsection does not apply to flags expressly permitted under this article.~~

~~(2) — Flashing signs.~~

~~(3) — Moving or windblown signs.~~

~~(4) — Mobile signs.~~

~~(5) — Signs that emit smoke, flame, scent, mist, aerosol, bubbles, liquid or gas.~~

~~(6) — Signs that emit sound.~~



- ~~(7) — Any electronic sign or digital text and graphic sign. This section does not apply to signs specifically required by section 9-7-7 of the City Code.~~
- ~~(8) — Pole signs.~~
- ~~(9) — Signs which utilize a spotlight or other device which projects a beam of light in the direction of any street, road, highway, alley or parking area, so that it may be seen by the operator of a motor vehicle when the vehicle is not parked.~~
- ~~(10) — Illuminated signs located higher than 35 feet above grade unless the building is located within 2,000 feet of and the sign is facing Interstate 95 (the Capital Beltway) or unless a special use permit is approved after a finding that the sign meets the following criteria:
 
  - ~~a) — Only one sign per building is permitted;~~
  - ~~b) — The building may not be located within, or on the borders of, the Old and Historic Alexandria or Parker Gray Districts;~~
  - ~~c) — The sign must meet any applicable design guidelines and follow any additional applicable process for approval;~~
  - ~~d) — The sign must be appropriate in scale, design and color and compatible with the building;~~
  - ~~e) — The sign may not be a neon sign;~~
  - ~~f) — The sign shall be subject to such conditions as the SUP may impose to ensure that the sign functions without glare or disturbance with nearby uses, including those rules which may alter, modify or supersede the rule stated in section 9-105(A)(2) with regard to the lighting not operating between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.; and~~
  - ~~g) — No sign may face the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and only minimum facade lighting facing the Parkway is allowed.~~
  - ~~h) — The sign shall be wall mounted.~~~~
- ~~(11) — Portable signs. This subsection does not apply to A-frame signs allowed herein.~~
- ~~(12) — Billboards.~~
- ~~(13) — Internally illuminated translucent rectangular panel signs. Signs that use a lightbox configuration where a light fixture is inside a rectangular box with the front surface consisting of a translucent panel on which information is displayed. This prohibition does not apply to channel lettering signs that use individual light boxes shaped like discrete letters or symbols.~~
- ~~(C) — Prohibitions based on location.
 
  - ~~(1) — Signs erected on public land other than 1) those approved by the city manager or his or her designee in writing, 2) those where an ordinance authorizing such encroachment has been enacted by city council, 3) those authorized by law without such approval, or 4) those permitted under Virginia Code § 24.2-310E. Any sign not so authorized is subject to immediate removal and disposal by any authorized~~~~

official. Removal of the sign under this provision does not preclude prosecution of the person responsible for the sign.

- (2) ~~Roof signs.~~
- (3) ~~Any sign that obstructs free or clear vision, or otherwise causes a safety hazard for vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic due to its location.~~
- (4) ~~Signs affixed to certain property. No temporary sign may be painted, marked, written, posted or displayed on, or otherwise affixed to, any private street sign, bus stop sign or traffic sign, sidewalk, crosswalk, curb, curbstone, street, lamp post, hydrant, railroad trestle, electric light or power pole or telephone pole or wire appurtenance thereof, fixture of the fire alarm system, drinking fountain, natural features such as trees, shrubs, rocks or tree stakes or guards.~~

#### 9-105 Standards and removal.

##### (A) ~~Standards.~~

##### (1) ~~Maintenance.~~

- (a) ~~All signs, marquees and awnings shall be maintained at all times in a safe structural condition and in a neat and clean condition, and shall be kept free from defective or missing parts or peeling paint.~~
- (b) ~~The building official may find cause to have signs removed or repaired immediately without written notice any sign which, in his or her opinion, has become insecure, in danger of falling, or otherwise unsafe, and, as such, presents an immediate threat to the safety of the public. If such action is necessary to render a sign safe, the cost of such emergency removal or repair shall be at the expense of the owner or lessee thereof as provided in the Uniform Statewide Building Code.~~

##### (2) ~~Illumination.~~

- (a) ~~Lighted signs facing and in close proximity to a residential zone shall not be illuminated between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.~~
- (b) ~~Such signs shall be constructed so that the lighting elements are shielded from view of the residential zone by nontransparent or translucent material or other means designed to eliminate glare.~~
- (c) ~~Illumination is prohibited for all temporary signs.~~
- (d) ~~Internal illumination is prohibited for rectangular panel signs, in accordance with section 9-104(B)(13).~~
- (e) ~~Illuminated signs higher than 35 feet are subject to section 9-104(B)(10).~~

##### (3) ~~Reflection.~~ No sign shall contain any reflective device.

##### (4) ~~Non-commercial sign substitution.~~ Wherever this article permits a sign with commercial content, non-commercial content is also permitted subject to the same requirements of size, color, illumination, movement, materials, location, height and construction.

~~(5) All free standing signs must comply with all applicable vision clearance requirements in 7-801 of the zoning ordinance.~~

~~(B) Removal.~~

- ~~(1) Whenever the use of a building or structure or real property is discontinued, all sign faces signs pertaining to that use which were previously erected or displayed shall be removed within 30 days of the discontinuance of the use.~~
- ~~(2) Irrespective of any continued use or any discontinuance in use of a building or structure, a supporting standard or structure for a sign shall be removed if the standard or structure is not occupied by a sign permitted by this ordinance for a continuous period of one year.~~
- ~~(3) It shall be the responsibility of the owner of the building, structure, or real property to accomplish the removal. If, after written notice to the owner from the director, such signs or supporting standards or structures are not removed within ten days of the notice, the city manager shall cause the removal and charge the cost to the owner.~~

~~9-106 Calculation of sign area.~~

~~The area of a sign is the sum of the areas within rectangular lines inscribed around each separate word, symbol or pictorial element on the face of a sign, and the height of a sign shall be measured to include the sign and supporting apparatus for any freestanding sign; provided that:~~

- ~~(A) The area of a sign, or any portion thereof, having a distinctive or ornamental border shall include both the area enclosed by the border, and the area enclosed within the border.~~
- ~~(B) The area of a sign, or any portion thereof, having a distinctive or ornamental background, which sets the background apart from a larger surface so that it forms an integral part or element of the sign, shall include the area of the background.~~
- ~~(C) The area of a freestanding sign, or any portion thereof, having a background which extends beyond the words, symbols or pictorial elements thereof shall include the area of the background including the base for monument signs.~~
- ~~(D) If any portion of the words, symbols or pictorial elements of a sign extends beyond a border or background or has no border or background, the area of that portion of the sign shall be the area of a rectangle inscribed around it.~~
- ~~(E) The area of a marquee, or any panel thereof, which specifically provides a background for a sign shall be included in the area of the sign.~~
- ~~(F) The area of any sign hung, placed, painted or displayed on a marquee or awning shall be included in determining the total area of signs erected or displayed.~~
- ~~(G) The area of a double face sign shall be considered to be the area of the one face having the larger area.~~

~~(Ord. No. 5029, § 2, 6-18-16)~~

9-200 –Signs regulations and limitations by zoning district.

9-201- Sign regulations.

Signs are permitted on any lot, in any zone, and in any required yard subject to all other applicable requirements of this Article.

*(A) Sign regulations for a lot containing a single-unit, two-unit, townhouse, and multi-unit up to four unit use.*

<u>Sign type</u>		<u>Maximum number of signs</u>	<u>Maximum sign area</u>	<u>Maximum height</u>
<u>Flags</u>		<u>3</u>	<u>16 square feet</u>	<u>25 feet</u>
<u>Freestanding, minor</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>1 square foot (each sign)</u>	<u>3 feet</u>
<u>Wall</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>1 square foot (each sign)</u>	<u>No limit</u>
<u>Temporary</u>	<u>On a lot with an active building permit or that is actively marketed for sale or rent</u>	<u>No limit</u>	<u>7 square feet</u>	<u>6 feet (freestanding only)</u>
	<u>Signs posted for no more than 120 days with a 30 day interruption between postings</u>		<u>7 square feet (each sign)</u>	

*(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>

<u>Freestanding, minor</u>	<u>Signs located 20 feet or less from any front lot line</u>	<u>5 per 100 feet of lot width</u>	<u>4 square feet</u>	
	<u>Signs located more than 20 feet from any front lot line</u>	<u>5 per 100 feet of lot width</u>	<u>8 square feet</u>	
<u>Wall</u>	<u>Signs located on buildings 40 feet tall or less</u>	<u>No limit</u>	<u>1:1.5 sign area ratio</u>	<u>No limit</u>
	<u>Signs located on buildings taller than 40 feet</u>		<u>1:2 sign area ratio</u>	
<u>Portable</u>		<u>1 per business</u>	<u>8 square feet</u>	<u>4 feet</u>
<u>Window</u>		<u>No limit</u>	<u>Cannot exceed more than 20% of the glazing area of the window where it is installed</u>	<u>No limit</u>
<u>Temporary</u>	<u>On a lot with an active building permit or that is actively marketed for sale or rent</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1:1 sign area ratio</u>	<u>6 feet (freestanding only)</u>
	<u>Signs posted for no more than 120 days with a 30 day interruption between postings</u>	<u>No limit</u>	<u>1:1 sign area ratio</u>	

9-202 – Signs permitted with special use permit.

**(A) 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:**

- i. The proposed signage has an exceptional design or approach that cannot be accomplished within the existing regulations;**
- ii. The proposed signage will not have an adverse impact on the nearby neighborhood; and**
- iii. The signs comply with the applicable standards for approval of a special use permit set forth in section 11-504.**

**(B) Signs permitted with administrative special use permit. The following signs may be allowed with administrative approval, subject to section 11-513:**

**(A) Any signs that exceed the maximum permitted number, height, or sign area;**

**(B) Temporary signs that are posted for more than 120 days without interruption; and**

**(C) Digital signs.**

9-203 – Prohibited signs.

The following signs are prohibited:

**(A) Flashing signs;**

**(B) Illuminated wall signs located higher than 35 feet above grade within historic districts or facing the George Washington Memorial Parkway;**

**(C) Internally illuminated panel signs;**

**(D) Moving signs;**

**(E) Pole signs that exceed six feet in height;**

**(F) Roof signs;**

**(G) Signs erected on public land; other than 1) those approved by the city manager or his or her designee in writing, 2) those where an ordinance authorizing such encroachment has been enacted by city council those approved by the City under a right-of-way agreement, 3) those authorized by law without such approval, or 4) those permitted under Virginia Code § 24.2-310E;**

**(H) Signs that simulate traffic control signs or any other sign displayed by a public authority. Any such sign is subject to immediate removal and disposal by an authorized city official as a nuisance;**

**(I) Any sign that causes a safety hazard for vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic due to its location;**

- (J) Signs that emit sound, smoke, flame, scent, mist, aerosol, bubbles, liquid, or gas; and
- (K) Billboards.

9-204 – Sign limitations, removal, and maintenance requirements.

(A) Limitations for illuminated signs.

- (1) Signs shall comply with the limitations established for lighting in City Code section 13-1-3 and
- (2) Signs facing or located on a lot abutting a residential zone shall not be illuminated between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m..

(B) Limitations for portable signs.

- (1) Signs shall be located on the property of the sign owner, outside a minimum lateral walkway clearance of five feet for pedestrian travel, within 15 feet of the front building wall, and a minimum of 15 feet from any driveway or intersection; and
- (2) Signs shall only be displayed during operating hours of the business.

(C) Removal and maintenance requirements.

- (1) Whenever the use of a building or structure or real property is discontinued, all sign faces pertaining to that use which were previously erected or displayed shall be removed within 30 days of the discontinuance of the use.
- (2) Irrespective of any continued use or any discontinuance in use of a building or structure, a supporting standard or structure for a sign shall be removed if the standard or structure is not occupied by a sign permitted by this ordinance for a continuous period of one year.
- (3) It shall be the responsibility of the owner of the building, structure, or real property to accomplish the removal. If, after written notice to the owner from the director, such signs or supporting standards or structures are not removed within ten days of the notice, the director shall cause the removal and charge the cost to the owner.
- (4) Any sign erected on public land is subject to immediate removal and disposal by any authorized official. Removal of the sign under this provision does not preclude liability of the person responsible for the sign.
- (5) All signs shall be maintained at all times in a safe structural condition and in a neat and clean condition and shall be kept free from defective or missing parts or peeling paint.
- (6) The building official may find cause to have signs removed or repaired immediately without written notice any sign which, in their opinion, has become insecure, in danger of falling, or otherwise unsafe, and, as such, presents an immediate threat to the safety of the public. If such action is necessary to render a sign safe, the cost of such emergency removal or repair shall be at the expense of the owner or lessee thereof as provided in the Uniform Statewide Building Code.

9-201 ~~Residential district signs.~~

~~(A) Except as otherwise prohibited in this article, the following signs are permitted as accessory to residential or non-residential uses in the following residential districts.~~

~~(1) In the R-20, R-12, R-8, R-5, R-2.5, RB, RM, RS, RT, POS, and WPR zones the following regulations shall apply:~~

~~a. On property used for residential purposes only the following signs are permitted:~~

~~i. *Flags:*~~

~~1. *Number and size limits:* One flag per 20 feet (or portion thereof) of lot width to a maximum of three flags per property with a maximum size of 16 square feet for each flag.~~

~~2. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding flags may only be less than 25 feet in height. Wall-mounted flags may only be on a projecting pole no longer than six feet or 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 for each dwelling unit on a lot:*~~

~~a. Signage with a total area of no more than ten square feet, however no single sign is permitted to be larger than four square feet.~~

~~b. One sign or combination of signs with a total area of no more than seven square feet in area on any property for sale or rent during the time the property is actively marketed and advertised for sale or actively marketed and advertised for rent.~~

~~2. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Signs may be ground mounted, wall mounted, or displayed within a window provided that it does not cover more than 20 percent of the glazing area of the window where it is installed. Freestanding signs may only be less than 42 inches in height, but for properties that are actively marketed and advertised for sale or rent, the sign permitted in subsection 1.b above can have a height that shall not exceed six feet.~~

~~iii. *Permanent signs:*~~

~~1. *Minor signs:*~~



- a. ~~Number and size limits:~~ Maximum of two signs per property per street frontage with a maximum size of one square foot for each sign.
- b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Freestanding minor signs may only be less than 36 inches in height. Wall mounted signs may only be mounted flat against the wall.

2. ~~Signs at the entrance to a neighborhood:~~

- a. ~~Number and size limits:~~ One permanent sign is permitted per entrance to a distinguishable neighborhood with a maximum size of 24 square feet for each sign.
- b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Such signs may only be installed as a monument sign that shall not exceed six feet in height.

3. ~~Signs painted on the curb:~~

- a. ~~Number and size limits:~~ One permanent sign is permitted per property with a maximum size of 0.5 square foot.
- b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Such signs may only be painted directly on the face of a curb on private property.

4. ~~Additional signs at a multifamily property in the RB zone:~~

- a. ~~Number and size limits:~~ One permanent sign is permitted per multi-family property to be located at each of the property's street frontages with a maximum size of 40 square feet for each sign if wall mounted or 32 square feet if free standing.
- b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Such sign can be freestanding or wall mounted. Freestanding installation is only permitted on a lot with a width of at least 100 feet at the front lot line only where off street parking is provided, leaving a distance between the building and a side lot line of 25 feet or more, or where a building is setback 25 feet or more from the front lot line. If freestanding, the sign shall be installed as a monument sign less than six feet in height, and shall be setback at least ten feet from the front lot line. Wall mounted signs may only be mounted flat against the wall.

b. ~~On property used for non-residential purposes:~~

i. ~~Flags:~~

- 1. ~~Number and size limits:~~ One flag per 20 feet (or portion thereof) of lot width to a maximum of maximum of five flags

per property with a maximum size of 24 square feet for each flag. Freestanding flags may only be attached to a pole less than 35 feet in height.

~~2. *Mounting and installation regulations:* 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. Signage with a total area of no more than 30 square feet, however no single sign is permitted to be larger than 24 square feet.~~

~~b. One sign or combination of signs with no more than seven square feet in area on any property for sale or rent during the time the property is actively marketed and advertised for sale or actively marketed and advertised for rent. Such sign, if freestanding, shall not exceed six feet in height.~~

~~2. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Unless otherwise specified, freestanding temporary signs may only be less than five feet in height. Wall-mounted temporary signs may only be mounted flat against the wall or on or in a window provided that the temporary sign does not cover more than 20 percent of the glazing area of the window where it is installed.~~

~~iii. *Permanent signs:*~~

~~1. *Minor signs:*~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* A maximum of five signs per property for each street frontage per 100 feet of lot width with a maximum size of one square foot for each sign.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding minor signs may only be less than 36 inches in height. Wall-mounted minor signs may only be mounted flat against the wall.~~

~~2. Signs at locations within ten feet of the curb edge of a parking lot or driveway only at intersections or areas where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to turn or change their course of travel:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* A maximum of one sign is permitted facing each direction at an intersection or area~~

where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to change their course of travel with a maximum size of six square feet for each sign.

b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ These signs may only be freestanding and less than 42 inches in height.

3. ~~Signs along property's street frontage:~~

a. ~~Number and size limits:~~ A maximum of one sign with a maximum size of 40 square feet for each sign is permitted if wall mounted or 32 square feet if free standing at each property street frontage.

b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Such sign can be freestanding or wall mounted. Freestanding installation is only permitted on a lot with a width of at least 100 feet at the front lot line only where off street parking is provided, leaving a distance between the building and a side lot line of 25 feet or more, or where a building is setback 25 feet or more from the front lot line. If freestanding, the sign shall be installed as a monument sign less than six feet in height, and shall be setback at least ten feet from the front lot line. Wall mounted signs may only be mounted flat against the wall.

4. ~~Signs painted on the curb:~~

a. ~~Number and size limits:~~ One permanent sign is permitted with a maximum size of 0.5 square foot.

b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Such signs may only be painted directly on the face of a curb.

5. ~~Signs at the entrance to a neighborhood:~~

a. ~~Number and size limits:~~ One permanent sign is permitted per entrance to a distinguishable neighborhood with a maximum size of 24 square feet for each sign.

b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Such signs may only be installed as a monument sign with less than six feet in height.

~~(2) In the RA, RC, RCX, and RD zones the following regulations shall apply:~~

a. ~~On property used for residential purposes only the following signs are permitted:~~

i. ~~Flags:~~

1. ~~Number and size limits:~~ One flag per 20 feet (or portion thereof) of lot width with a maximum size of 18 square feet per flag.

~~2.— *Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding flags may only be 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:* Signage with a total area of no more than 40 square feet, however no single sign is permitted to be larger than 24 square feet.~~

~~2.— *Mounting and installation regulations:* Unless otherwise specified, freestanding temporary signs shall not exceed six feet in height. Wall mounted temporary signs may only be mounted flat against the wall or on or in a window provided that the temporary sign does not cover more than 20 percent of the glazing area of the window where it is installed.~~

~~iii.— *Permanent signs:*~~

~~1.— *Minor signs:*~~

~~a.— *Number and size limits:* Maximum of five signs per lot with a maximum size of one square foot per sign.~~

~~b.— *Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding minor signs may only be less than 36 inches in height. Wall mounted signs may only be mounted flat against the wall.~~

~~2.— *Signs at the entrance to a neighborhood:*~~

~~a.— *Number and size limits:* One permanent sign is permitted per entrance to a distinguishable neighborhood with a maximum size of 24 square feet for each sign.~~

~~b.— *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs may only be installed as a monument sign with less than six feet in height.~~

~~3.— *Signs painted on the curb:*~~

~~a.— *Number and size limits:* One permanent sign is permitted with a maximum size of 0.5 square foot.~~

~~b.— *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs may only be painted directly on the face of a curb on private property.~~

~~4. Signs at locations within ten feet of the curb edge of a parking lot or driveway only at intersections or areas where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to turn or change their course of travel:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* A maximum of one sign is permitted in each direction at an intersection or area where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to change their course of travel with a maximum size of six square feet for each sign.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* These signs may only be freestanding and less than 42 inches in height.~~

~~5. Signs along a multi-family property's street frontage:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* Signage with a total area of no more than 60 square feet per property frontage, however no single wall mounted sign is permitted to be larger than 40 square feet, and no freestanding sign is permitted to be larger than 32 square feet.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such sign can be freestanding or wall mounted. Freestanding installation is only permitted on a lot with a width of at least 100 feet at the front lot line only where off-street parking is provided, leaving a distance between the building and a side lot line of 25 feet or more, or where a building is setback 25 feet or more from the front lot line. If a freestanding, the sign shall be installed as a monument sign that shall not exceed six feet in height, and shall be setback at least ten feet from the front lot line.~~

~~b. On property used for mixed use or non-residential purposes:~~

~~i. *Flags:*~~

~~1. *Number and size limits:* One flag per feet (or portion thereof) of lot width with a maximum size of 18 square feet per 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 9-201.A(2)b.iii.6.~~

~~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:* Signage with a total area of no more than 40 square feet, however no single sign is permitted to be larger than 24 square feet.~~
- ~~2. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Unless otherwise specified, freestanding temporary signs may only be less than five feet in height. Wall mounted temporary signs may only be mounted flat against the wall or on or in a window provided that the temporary sign does not cover more than 20 percent of the glazing area of the window where it is installed.~~

iii. ~~Permanent signs:~~

1. ~~Minor signs:~~

- ~~a. *Number and size limits:* Maximum of five signs per property for each street frontage per 100 feet of lot width with a maximum size of one square foot for each sign.~~
- ~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding minor signs may only be less than 36 inches in height. Wall mounted signs may only be mounted flat against the wall.~~

2. ~~Signs at the entrance to a neighborhood:~~

- ~~a. *Number and size limits:* One permanent sign is permitted per entrance to a distinguishable neighborhood with a maximum size of 24 square feet for each sign.~~
- ~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs may only be installed as a monument sign that shall not exceed six feet in height.~~

3. ~~Signs painted on the curb:~~

- ~~a. *Number and size limits:* One permanent sign is permitted with a maximum size of 0.5 square foot.~~
- ~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs may only be painted directly on the face of a curb on private property.~~

4. ~~Signs at locations within ten feet of the curb edge of a parking lot or driveway only at intersections or areas where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to turn or change their course of travel:~~

- ~~a. *Number and size limits:* A maximum of one sign is permitted in each direction at an intersection or area where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to change their~~

~~course of travel with a maximum size of six square feet for each sign.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* These signs may only be freestanding and less than 42 inches in height.~~

~~5. Signs along a multi-family or non-residential property's street frontage:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* Signage with a total area of no more than 60 square feet per property frontage, however no single wall mounted sign is permitted to be larger than 40 square feet, and no freestanding sign is permitted to be larger than 32 square feet.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such sign can be freestanding or wall mounted. Freestanding installation is only permitted on a lot with a width of at least 100 feet at the front lot line only where off-street parking is provided, leaving a distance between the building and a side lot line of 25 feet or more, or where a building is setback 25 feet or more from the front lot line. If a freestanding, the sign shall be installed as a monument sign that shall not exceed six feet in height, and shall be setback at least ten feet from the front lot line.~~

~~6. Wall signs at the entrance to a non-residential building or part of a building:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* A maximum of one sign with a maximum size of one square foot for each linear foot of building width for the wall on which the sign is mounted.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such sign shall be wall mounted and may only be mounted flat against the wall. Such sign cannot be higher than 20 feet above grade measured from the location immediately below the sign. Such signs may also be mounted on an awning or marquee. Marquees and awnings are only permitted to encroach upon a public right-of-way if permitted by an enacted encroachment ordinance or which city council has expressly authorized installation.~~

~~7. Projecting signs at the entrance to a non-residential building or part of a building:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* The total area of all signage on the building shall be 16 square feet. The area allowed for this signage shall be deducted from area allowed for permanent wall signage or other temporary wall signage, as permitted in section 9-201.A(2)b.iii.6.~~

b. ~~Mounting and installation regulations:~~ Such signs shall be wall mounted. Such sign shall not project more than four feet from the building wall or within one foot of an established curb line and the bottom of the sign is to be at least eight feet above a sidewalk or parking area and at least 14.5 feet above an alley. Such sign cannot be higher than 20 feet above grade measured from the location immediately below the sign to the top of the sign. Such signs are only permitted to encroach upon a public right-of-way if permitted by an enacted encroachment ordinance or which city council has expressly authorized installation.

~~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 9-202(A)ii.1.b or in sections 9-201(A)iii.6 or 9-201(A)iii.7.~~
- b. ~~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 is actively marketed and advertised for sale or actively marketed and advertised for rent. 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 9-202(A)ii.1.a or in sections 9-201(A)iii.6 or 9-201(A-iii.7.~~

~~e. One sign with a maximum size of the greater of 20 square feet or 0.5 square feet for each linear foot of building width for the wall on which the sign is mounted up to 100 square feet. The maximum period for this sign is 60 days per six-month period of a year.~~

~~2. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such sign shall be wall mounted and may only be mounted flat against the wall or installed as a window sign. Such sign cannot be higher than 20 feet above grade measured from the location immediately below the sign to the top of the sign. On a vacant lot, such sign can be freestanding, but shall have a height no greater than six feet and an area no greater than 40 square feet.~~

~~iii. Permanent signs:~~

~~1. Minor Signs only permitted in the CC, CG, CR, CSL, CRMU /L, CRMU/M, CRMU/H, CRMU/X, OC, OCH, OCM(50), and OCM(100) zones, but not permitted in the CD, CDX, CL, KR, NR, or W-1 zones:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* Maximum of five signs per property for each street frontage per 100 feet of lot width with a maximum size of one square foot for each sign.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding minor signs may only be less than 36 inches in height. Wall mounted signs may only be mounted flat against the wall.~~

~~2. Signs at the entrance to a neighborhood:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* One permanent sign is permitted per entrance to a distinguishable neighborhood with a maximum size of 24 square feet for each sign.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs may only be installed as a monument sign that shall not exceed six feet in height.~~

~~3. Signs painted on the curb:~~

~~a. *Number and size limits:* One permanent sign is permitted with a maximum size of 0.5 square foot.~~

~~b. *Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs may only be painted directly on the face of a curb on private property.~~

~~4. Signs at locations within ten feet of the curb edge of a parking lot or driveway only at intersections or areas where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to turn or change their course of travel:~~

- a. ~~*Number and size limits:* A maximum of one sign is permitted in each direction at an intersection or area where motor vehicles or pedestrians would need to change their course of travel with a maximum size of six square feet for each sign.~~
- b. ~~*Mounting and installation regulations:* These signs may only be freestanding and less than 42 inches in height.~~

5. ~~Freestanding signs at a property's street frontage:~~

- a. ~~*Number and size limits:*~~
  - i. ~~At a lot containing no more than two businesses, a maximum of one freestanding sign is permitted with a maximum area of 32 square feet and a maximum height of six feet above grade to the top of the sign.~~
  - ii. ~~At a lot containing three or more businesses, a maximum of one freestanding sign is permitted with a maximum area of 40 square feet and a maximum height of six feet above grade to the top of the sign.~~
  - iii. ~~A lot with a width of more than 200 feet at the front lot line may contain two freestanding signs in compliance with either (i) or (ii) above.~~
  - iv. ~~When the street frontage of a lot is in excess of 300 feet, the number of signs and allowable sign area may be increased with a special use permit.~~
- b. ~~*Mounting and installation regulations:* Freestanding installation shall only be permitted on a lot with a width of at least 100 feet at the front lot line and only where drive in service or off street parking is provided, leaving a distance between the building and a side lot line of 25 feet or more, or where a building is setback 25 feet or more from the front lot line. If a freestanding, the sign shall be installed as a monument sign, and it shall be setback at least ten feet from the front lot line. A freestanding sign shall have no more than two faces and shall be double faced back to back only. No signs other than those indicated on the sign application shall be attached to a freestanding sign.~~

6. ~~Wall signs:~~

- a. ~~*Number and size limits:* The total area of all signs displayed on a building wall which faces a street, alley or parking area shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building width facing the street, alley or parking area.~~
- b. ~~*Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs shall be wall mounted and may only be mounted flat against the wall. Such sign cannot be higher than 20 feet above grade measured from the location immediately below the sign. Such signs may be mounted~~

on an awning or marquee. Marquees and awnings are only permitted to encroach upon a public right of way if permitted by an enacted encroachment ordinance or which city council has expressly authorized installation.

7. ~~Wall signs higher than 20 feet above grade on a multi-story building:~~

a. ~~*Number and size limits:* The total area of all signs displayed on a building wall higher than 20 feet above grade on a multi-story building which faces a street, alley or parking area shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building width facing the street, alley or parking area.~~

b. ~~*Mounting and installation regulations:* Such sign shall be wall mounted and may only be mounted flat against the wall. No part of this sign is permitted to be lower than 20 feet above grade measured from the location immediately below the sign.~~

8. ~~Projecting signs at the entrance to a non-residential building or non-residential part of a building:~~

a. ~~*Number and size limits:* The total area of all signage on the building shall be 16 square feet. The area allowed for this signage shall be deducted from area allowed for permanent wall signage or other temporary wall signage, as permitted in section 9-202(A)ii.1.b or in sections 9-201(A)iii.6 or iii.7.~~

b. ~~*Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs shall be wall mounted. Such sign shall not project more than four feet from the building wall or within one foot of an established curb line and the bottom of the sign is to be at least eight feet above a sidewalk or parking area and at least 14.5 feet above an alley. Such sign cannot be higher than 20 feet above grade measured from the location immediately below the sign. Such signs are only permitted to encroach upon a public right of way if permitted by an enacted encroachment ordinance or which city council has expressly authorized installation.~~

9. ~~Projecting signs higher than 20 feet above grade on a multi-story building:~~

a. ~~*Number and size limits:* The total area of all signage on the building shall be 24 square feet. The area allowed for this signage shall be deducted from area allowed for permanent wall signage or other temporary wall signage, as permitted in section 9-202(A)ii.1.b or in sections 9-201(A)iii.6 or 9-201(A)iii.7.~~

b. ~~*Mounting and installation regulations:* Such signs shall be wall mounted. Such sign shall not project more than four feet from the building wall or within one foot of an established curb line. Such signs are only permitted to encroach upon a public right of way if permitted by an enacted encroachment ordinance or which city council has expressly authorized installation. No part of this sign is~~

permitted to be lower than 20 feet above grade measured from the location immediately below the sign.

- ~~iv. Any sign larger than 100 square feet in area shall have each letter or symbol installed as a separately mounted unit. No sign that measures 100 square feet or larger shall consist of an individual panel.~~
- ~~v. Size and location limitations. Signs permitted within a commercial zone under section 9-202(A) may be displayed on any building wall which faces a street, alley or parking area or may be freestanding signs, and shall comply with the provisions herein.~~
- ~~vi. Marquees and awnings. Marquees and awnings may be used as a sign background.~~
- ~~(B) Window signs. The total area of window signs, in any one window shall not exceed 20 percent of the glazing area of the window where it is installed. The total area of window signs shall be included in determining the total area of signs erected or displayed on the wall that contains the window.~~
- ~~(C) A frame signs on the property of individual businesses. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in this ordinance, A frame signs are permitted on private property in commercial districts that are not within the Parker Gray District or the Old and Historic Alexandria District subject to compliance with the following standards:
  - ~~(1) Location. An A frame sign shall only be located:
    - ~~a. On the property of the owner of the sign;~~
    - ~~b. Outside of a minimum lateral walkway clearance of five feet for pedestrian travel;~~
    - ~~c. Within 15 feet of the front facade of the building;~~
    - ~~d. Not encroaching in the line of vision clearance for motor vehicles; and~~
    - ~~e. A minimum of 15 feet from any driveway or roadway intersection.~~~~
  - ~~(2) Number. A maximum of one sign is permitted per business.~~
  - ~~(3) Size. Signs may not exceed 42 inches in height and 24 inches in width.~~
  - ~~(4) Pedestrian safety. Pedestrian safety shall be preserved through the placement and securing of signs so as to permit safe and adequate pedestrian throughway along the walkways, crossing of streets or parking areas, entry and alighting from cars and buses, and access to curb ramps.~~
  - ~~(5) Temporary. All signs, including installation materials, shall be temporary and shall be readily removable without any damage to the pavement or ground surface.~~
  - ~~(6) Time limits. An A frame sign is permitted outdoors only during operating hours of the establishment where the sign is located.~~
  - ~~(7) Materials and design.
    - ~~a. Only high quality, durable materials shall be used, such as slate, marker board, stainless steel, aluminum, aluminum composite, laminate plastic or medium density overlay plywood painted with enamel paint.~~~~~~

b. ~~—Illumination is prohibited.~~

c. ~~—Braces are required to ensure that the sign legs remain adequately spread to prevent it from falling.~~

d. ~~—The sign shall be a minimum weight of 20 pounds properly balanced to ensure that it would not blow away in the wind.~~

~~(8) *Compliance with law.* All signs shall comply with all applicable city, state and federal laws and regulations.~~

~~9-203 Industrial district signs.~~

~~(A) *Generally.* In the I and UT zones, any sign, marquee and awning permitted in a commercial zone under section 9-202 may be erected or displayed so long as it complies with all other applicable requirements of this Article IX; provided, that the total area of any signs in an industrial or utility zone which face real property in a commercial, industrial or utility zone may exceed the area allowed in section 9-202 by up to 50 percent.~~

~~(B) *Window signs.* Window signs are permitted up to 20 percent of the glazing area of a window and count toward the maximum square footage of wall signs permitted. Window signs are permitted only on the first floor of a building unless the applicant only has business operations located on an upper floor where the window sign is to be displayed.~~

~~9-204 Signs permitted in all zones.~~

~~(A) Additional temporary signs no larger than the largest temporary sign allowed on the property pursuant to section 9-200 are permitted on any property with the permission of the property owner for no more than 90 days, and there shall be a 30-day interruption between posting periods for temporary signs in this section.~~

~~(Ord. No. 5029, § 2, 6-18-16)~~

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~~Sec. 9-400 – Administration and enforcement.~~

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~~9-402 – Nonconforming signs.~~

(A) Nonconforming signs means any sign that existed prior to the effective date of any change in the zoning regulations or restrictions but which thereafter, by reason of such change, is not in compliance with the zoning regulations or restrictions then in effect lawfully in existence on the effective date of this chapter or prior ordinances, which do not conform with the provisions of this article, and signs which are accessory to a nonconforming use shall be deemed to be nonconforming signs and may remain except as qualified below. The burden of establishing nonconforming status of signs and of the physical characteristics/location of such signs shall be that of the owner of the property. Upon notice from the zoning administrator, a property owner shall submit verification that sign(s) were lawfully existing at time of erection. Failure to provide such verification shall be cause for order to remove sign(s) or bring sign(s) into compliance with the current ordinance.

Nonconforming signs shall be permitted to continue indefinitely and shall be considered legal uses and structures subject to the following:

- (B) No nonconforming sign shall be modified or relocated unless such modification or relocation complies with this article ~~enlarged nor shall any feature of a nonconforming sign, such as illumination, be increased.~~
- (C) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prevent keeping in good repair a nonconforming sign, other than a pole sign. If a nonconforming sign, other than a pole sign, is destroyed, demolished, or otherwise removed, it may be reconstructed provided that there is no increase in the degree of noncompliance which existed prior to such destruction, demolition, or removal. Nonconforming signs shall not be extended or structurally reconstructed or altered in any manner, except a sign face may be changed so long as the new face is equal to or reduced in height and/or sign area. Nonconforming pole signs shall be removed within seven years of the date of adoption (June 18, 2016).
- (D) A pole sign which exceeds six feet in height shall be removed if:
  - (1) The pole sign is destroyed, demolished, or otherwise removed or
  - (2) The cost to repair a damaged sign is more than 50% of the replacement value of the sign.
- ~~(D) No nonconforming sign shall be moved for any distance on the same lot or to any other lot unless such change in location will make the sign conform in all respects to the provisions of this article.~~
- ~~(E) A nonconforming sign that is destroyed or damaged by any casualty to an extent not exceeding 50 percent of its area may be restored within two years after such destruction or damage but shall not be enlarged in any manner. If such sign is so destroyed or damaged to an extent exceeding 50 percent, it shall not be reconstructed but may be replaced with a sign that is in full accordance with the provisions of this article.~~
- (F) A nonconforming sign which is changed to becoming conforming or is replaced by a conforming sign shall no longer be deemed nonconforming, and thereafter such sign shall be in accordance with the provisions of this article.

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11-513 – Administrative special use permit.

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(W) Specific standards for signs.

- (1) All signs and sign structures shall comply with the height regulations of the zone in which they are located.
- (2) Signs must be located on a site that has one or more of the following:
  - (a) A lot size of 15,000 square feet or more;
  - (b) Three or more businesses;
  - (c) Frontage on more than one street; or
  - (d) Frontage exceeding 400 feet.

- (3) For temporary signs only, the administrative special use permit shall expire two years from the date of approval.
- (4) The wall sign area ratio, including temporary signs, shall not exceed 1:2.
- (5) The sign is not a prohibited sign pursuant to section 9-203.
- (6) The number of freestanding signs shall not exceed the maximum number permitted by more than 50 percent. If fewer than two freestanding monument signs are permitted pursuant to section 9-201, no more than one additional freestanding monument sign shall be permitted with administrative special use permit approval.
- (7) The freestanding sign shall not have a sign area or height of more than one-third larger than the maximum sign area and taller than the height otherwise permitted.
- (8) Digital signs shall comply with the following criteria:
  - (a) Signs shall comply with the illumination limitations in section 9-204(A);
  - (b) Text, graphics, and images shall not be animated, move, or flash;
  - (c) Signs shall have an automatic photocell dimmer; and
  - (d) The changing of text or graphics shall occur no more than two times per minute.