



City of Alexandria

Sign Ordinance Update

ZTA #2024-00010

City Council Public Hearing

March 15, 2025



Agenda



1. Summary
2. Background
3. Discussion and Recommendation



Summary

Request

- Update City's sign regulations

Council Action

- Approve or deny

Key Elements of the Discussion

- Greater clarity and consistency
- Allow digital signs with staff-level approval
- Increase sign size allowances to be more in line with both neighboring jurisdictions and past approval
- Streamline sign approval process



Background Information

- May 2016: last comprehensive update to sign regulations
- March 2022: Planning Commission requested that staff review the City's digital sign regulations
- May 2023: staff presented digital sign policy updates to Planning Commission and proposed a more comprehensive update to the sign regulations



Organization, clarity, and conciseness

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

Example of current sign regulations

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

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

i. Flags:

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

ii. Temporary signs:

1. *Number, size and time limits*:

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

Proposed chart

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

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



Sign allowance increases

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

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





Amend SUP requirements

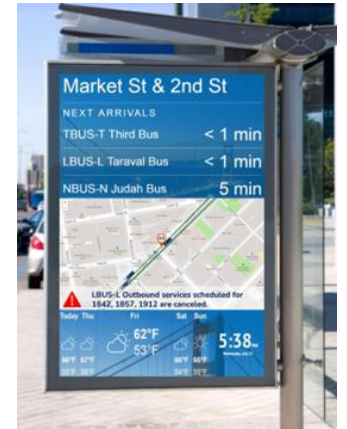
- Create administrative SUP process
 - Increase size, height, or number
 - Temporary sign time limit
 - Digital signs
- Allow Illuminated signs over 35 feet without SUP approval





Digital sign standards

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





Other changes

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



Outreach

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



City Council Guidance

Staff and Planning Commission recommended approval

- Planning Commission recommended that the existing sign SUP approval process should remain

