

Sign Code Update: Summary of Most Significant Policy Changes

October 2018

	Current Standard	Proposed Code	Notes
1	Sign provisions based on underlying zoning district.	Sign provisions based on four sign zones (Downtown, Auto Mall, Business & Corridor, and Residential).	Added language to address mixed use. Provides more consistency across similar zoning districts than current code.
2	Several sign provisions based on content.	Content neutral approach to sign standards.	Can address time, manner, and placement. Some differences between commercial and non-commercial speech allowed.
3	Some sign types not addressed.	New provisions to address feather, alley, and “light projection” signs.	
4	Most zones allow 1 building mounted sign per street frontage, with maximum size determined by width of wall the sign will be placed on.	Calculate sign area the same way, but allow business to divvy that allocation up in more ways.	Add provision for some businesses w/public entrance more than 200 ft. from the sidewalk.
5	Businesses in many zones can have a freestanding sign or a building mounted sign.	Do not allow new freestanding signs in the downtown.	<i>Waiting for input from ODA on this.</i>
6	Building entrance signs must be placed above the public entrance. Three sizes for this type of sign, depending on type of location/business.	Allow more flexibility for placement and type of building entrance signs.	Max sign area is ten square feet for all Building Entrance signs.
7	Development identification signs, where allowed, require that each tenant have the same amount of sign area allowed	Division of space among tenants on development identification signs will be determined by property owner and tenants.	



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8	To calculate area for building mounted signs, almost all business can have up to 1 square foot of sign area for each linear foot of wall length of the tenant space, regardless of distance from the street.	Businesses with the primary public entrance to the business that are 200 feet or more from the back of the sidewalk on an arterial or major collector may have up to 1.5 square feet of sign area for each linear foot of wall length for the tenant space.	
9	No provisions for Master Sign Plans.	Add provision for Master Sign Plan to allow flexibility and potentially more signage for certain institutional-type uses (e.g. colleges, hospitals).	
10	Hold time for public service signs at academic schools is five minutes. The hold time is three minutes for the Development Identification Electronic Readerboard Sign for the sign at the Auto Mall. No hold time noted for other similar signs.	Safety standards for changing messages may allow for more frequent messages. Proposing a new minimum hold time of twenty seconds with a minimum transition time between messages of one second.	Currently no hold time provision related to the few private electronic message signs.
11	Limited code provisions to address historic preservation related to signs.	Historic & Legacy Sign language added, refers to Secretary of Interior standards.	Better alignment with city's historic preservation code.
12	Temporary Signs: Different standards for several kinds of temporary signs (e.g. political, sandwich board, real estate).	More standardization for temporary signs that do not contain commercial speech.	
13	Design review is required for signs in some zoning districts but not all.	Design review of signs will only be required in the Downtown Sign zone.	
14	No provisions for signage next to major public trails.	Language added to address commercial redevelopment opportunities that may include orientation and interaction (public entrances) with major public trails.	For commercial uses that have public entrances or outdoor seating adjacent to Class 1 Trails, such as the Karen Fraser Woodland Trail.

