

Section 6 – Signs

6.0 - How to Use this Section

This Section is divided into three main subsections, types of signs, sign permissions, and sign standards. To use this Section, first identify the type of sign proposed. Then, find that sign type in either the Table of Permitted Permanent Signs or the Table of Permitted Temporary Signs. Next, determine which zoning district your proposed sign will be located in. Then use the table to determine whether the proposed sign is permitted as of right, conditionally, or is prohibited. If the proposed sign is permitted as-of-right or conditionally, proceed to Section Eight, Administration and Enforcement, for instruction on the sign permitting process.

6.1 - General Provisions

6.1.1 - Scope

The provisions of this Section shall govern the display, construction, erection, alteration, use, location, repair, and maintenance of all signs together with their appurtenant and auxiliary devices in respect to structural and fire safety. It shall be unlawful after the adoption of this Section to display, construct, erect, alter, use, or maintain any sign except in conformance with the provisions of this Section.

6.1.2 - Approved Rules

In the absence of approved rules governing details of construction, the provisions of ANSI A60.1 (American National Standards Institute, Inc.; Building Code Requirements for Load, Minimum Design in Buildings and Other Structures) as amended from time to time shall be deemed to conform to the requirements of this Code unless otherwise specified in this Section.

6.1.3 - Viewpoint Neutrality

- 1) Notwithstanding anything in this Section to the contrary, no sign or sign structure shall be subject to any limitation based upon the viewpoint of the message contained on such sign or displayed on such sign structure.
- 2) Notwithstanding anything in this Section to the contrary, it is the policy of the City to regulate signs in a manner that does not favor commercial speech over noncommercial speech and does not regulate protected noncommercial speech by message content.
- 3) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Section to the contrary, any sign erected pursuant to the provisions of this Section may, at the option of the owner, contain a noncommercial message in lieu of a commercial message and the noncommercial copy may be substituted in whole or in part at any time in place of the commercial copy. The noncommercial message (copy) may occupy the entire sign face or any portion of the sign face. The Sign Face may be changed from a commercial message to a noncommercial message or from one noncommercial message to another non-commercial message; provided, however, that there is no change in the size, height, setback, or spacing criteria contained in this Section.

6.1.4 - Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Section is to:

- 1) Regulate signs and sign lighting to preserve and enhance the appearance of Sunset Hills, and to protect the value of properties in the City;
- 2) Insure that all signs within the City are compatible with existing land uses and/or buildings regarding size, location, construction, and materials, and to discourage an unsightly, disproportionate, inappropriate, and excessive number of signs;

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- 3) Insure that signs do not confuse, mislead, or otherwise endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare;
- 4) Reduce visual clutter that may otherwise be caused by the proliferation, improper placement, illumination, animation, excessive height, and excessive size (area) of signs which compete for the attention of pedestrian and vehicular traffic; and

6.2 - Dimensional Standards of Permanent and Temporary Signs

The maximum size of aggregate sign(s), regardless of sign type, shall not be greater than one square foot of sign area per lineal foot of lot frontage.

6.2.1 - Wall Signs

The following dimensional standards shall apply to wall signs in the following zoning districts: LC, GC, LI, and PO.

- 1) **Size.** Wall signs may cover a maximum of five percent of building frontage on which the sign is located.
- 2) **Height.** No wall sign shall protrude above the highest roof line or above the top of the parapet wall or mansard roof.
- 3) **Projection.** Such signs shall not horizontally project more than 12 inches from the wall of the building or structure to which it is attached and shall maintain a minimum vertical clearance of 10 feet.
- 4) **Number of signs.** Only one wall sign per building frontage of the building or unit of a building.
- 5) **Provisions.**
 - a) Building frontage for the purpose of this section shall be defined as the established main public entrance for each unit.
 - b) On multiple-tenant buildings with multiple wall signs, all signs shall be of the same style, proportions, base colors, and constructed of the same materials.
 - c) Corner lots may display a second sign for the secondary frontage.
 - d) No wall sign shall cover any architectural features (architectural features shall include, but not be limited to: pediment, cornice, belt course, pier, windows, pilaster, roof, decorative stone or tile inlay, kick plate/bulkhead, raised or colored brick pattern, and corbel) of the building to which it is affixed.
 - e) No wall sign shall be affixed to HVAC screening, elevator overrun, or other features protruding from the roof of the structure, with the exception of building parapets which have been designed and integrated into the architecture of the building and which are in line with and not set back from the perimeter façade of the building.

[Insert Wall Sign Graphic]

6.2.2 - Monument Signs

The following dimensional standards shall apply to monument signs in the following zoning districts: LC, GC, LI, and PO.

- 1) **Size.** The maximum size of the sign area of a monument sign shall be no greater than 50 square feet.
- 2) **Height.** The maximum height of any monument sign as measured from the base or foundation of the sign shall be no greater than 8 feet above the center line datum elevation of the street immediately adjacent to the sign location.
- 3) **Number of signs.** Each lot or parcel of land under one ownership or use may not have more than one monument sign, with a maximum of two display surfaces, except that any lot or parcel with a frontage of 350 feet or more may have two monument signs located not less than 250 feet apart.
- 4) **Setbacks.**

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- a) No part of any monument sign may be closer than five feet from any street right-of-way, property line, wall, fence, or any obstruction which would prevent a clear passage around.
- 5) **Landscape requirements.** A landscape planting area is required at the base of the sign. The landscape area should be at least equal to the square footage of the sign in question.
- 6) **Provisions.**
 - a) No monument sign shall be located within eight feet of any electric power line, service drops or line conductors, or in any location where the Director of Public Works or his/her designee finds a reasonable danger that any electric power line would come in contact with the sign.
 - b) No monument sign shall be located within or over any public utility easement.
 - c) The structural supports of all monument signs shall be concealed within the supporting base or by rigid trim and/or skirting material.

[Insert Monument Sign Graphic]

Monument signs in the R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 districts shall only be permitted as Comprehensive Sign Plans as detailed in Section 6.5 of this Title.

[Insert Monument Graphic 2]

6.2.3 - Canopy/Awning Signs

The following dimensional standards shall apply to canopy or awning signs in the following zoning districts: LC, GC, LI, and PO.

- 1) **Height.** All canopies and awnings shall be constructed and erected so that the lowest portion of the projecting frame shall be not less than eight feet above the existing monument or grade level, and the lowest portion of the extending skirt shall be not less than seven feet six inches above the existing monument or grade level.
- 2) **Projection.** Such signs shall not horizontally project more than three feet six inches beyond the line of the building or structure nor more than three feet six inches beyond that portion of the building or structure to which it is attached.
- 3) **Area.** No advertising lettering shall cover more than 20 percent of the canopy or awning surface area.
- 4) **Provisions.**
 - a. Such signs shall have no internal illumination.
 - b. Such signs shall be erected as permitted by this Section but must be part of the total wall sign area, not in addition to a wall sign as permitted by this Section.
 - c. Such signs may not encroach upon or extend or project over any public right-of-way, including, but not limited to, streets, alleys, and sidewalks.
 - d. All projecting signs shall be no closer than 18 inches to the curb of any adjacent street.

[Insert Canopy and Awning Sign Graphics]

6.2.4 - Window Signs

The following dimensional standards shall apply to window signs in the following zoning districts: LC, GC, LI, and PO.

- 1) **Coverage.** The total window sign should not exceed 20 percent of each window section.

[Insert Window Signs Graphic]

6.2.5 - Banner Signs

The following dimensional standards shall apply to banner signs in the following zoning districts: LC, GC, LI, and PO.

- 1) **Size.** The maximum size of a banner sign shall not be greater than .5 square feet of sign area per lineal foot of building frontage. Maximum of 50 square feet per banner sign is permitted.
- 2) **Height.** No banner sign shall protrude above the highest roof line or above the top of the parapet wall or mansard roof.
- 3) **Projection.** Such signs shall be affixed flat against the building to which they are mounted.
- 4) **Number of signs.** Only one banner sign per building frontage of the building or unit of a building is permitted.
- 5) **Provisions.**
 - a. Building frontage for the purpose of this section shall be defined as the established main public entrance for each unit.

6.2.6 - Sandwich Board (A-Frame/Sidewalk Signs)

The following dimensional standards shall apply to sandwich board signs in the following zoning districts: B1, B2, B3, and B4.

- 1) **Size.** The maximum size of any sandwich board sign shall not be greater than six square feet.
- 2) **Height.** The maximum height of any sandwich board sign shall not be greater than 40 inches above the existing ground or grade level.
- 3) **Setback.** No part of any sandwich board sign may be closer than five feet from any street right-of-way or property line.
- 4) **Provisions.**
 - a. No part of any sandwich board sign shall either impede the flow of pedestrian traffic along any adjacent sidewalks or block any points of ingress or egress.

6.3 - Permitted Permanent Signs

The following Table identifies the permanent signs that are permitted as of right or conditionally in the indicated districts. Before any permanent sign may be erected or constructed, a permanent sign permit must first be issued by the Director of Public Works or his/her designee.

- 1) P: Signs permitted as of right
- 2) C: Signs permitted conditionally
- 3) X: Prohibited signs

Sign Category	LC	GC	LI	PO
Wall Sign	P	P	P	P
Monument Sign	P	P	P	P
Canopy/Awning Sign	P	C	X	X
Window Sign	P	P	X	X

6.4 - Permitted Temporary Signs

The following Table identifies the temporary signs that are permitted as of right or conditionally in the indicated districts. Permitted temporary signs shall be displayed for a period not to exceed 30 days per calendar year. Before any temporary sign may be erected or constructed, a temporary sign permit must first be issued by the Director of Public Works or his/her designee.

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- 1) P: Signs permitted as of right
- 2) C: Signs permitted conditionally
- 3) X: Prohibited signs

Sign Type	LC	GC	LI	PO
Banner	P	P	C	C
Sandwich Board	P	P	X	X

6.5 – Comprehensive Sign Plans

A Comprehensive Sign Plan may be approved as an alternative to the requirements set forth in this Section for the uses and developments listed below.

6.5.1 – Applicability

The Plan Commission may approve a Comprehensive Sign Plan for the following uses and developments:

- 1) Multiple tenant commercial, office, or employment uses,
- 2) Residential subdivisions,
- 3) Nonresidential uses in residential districts (places of worship, schools, etc.)
- 4) A multiple-building complex for a single commercial or employment use in a project exceeding XX acres,
- 5) Stand-alone office/employment buildings exceeding XX square feet,
- 6) Indoor or outdoor entertainment and recreation uses,
- 7) Auto malls,
- 8) Hospitals,
- 9) Hotels and commercial lodging have at least XX guest rooms and a full-service restaurant or conference and meeting rooms, and
- 10) Regional retail shopping malls.

6.5.2 – Conditions

The Plan Commission may attach conditions, requirements, or standards necessary to assure that the signs covered by the Comprehensive Sign Plan will not be materially detrimental to persons or property in the vicinity. In making its determination, the Plan Commission shall not base any condition on the message content of a sign.

6.5.3 – Evaluation Criteria

- 1) **Placement.** All signs shall be placed where they are visible and legible. Factors to be considered include its location relative to traffic movement and access points, site features, other structures, and orientation relative to viewing distances and viewing angles. Wall Signs may be approved on building walls other than the wall of the space occupied by the tenant in commercial centers in which some tenants have little or no visibility from the street.
- 2) **Quantity.** The number of signs that may be approved within any development shall be sufficient to provide necessary facilitation of internal circulation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and way finding for safety of the occupants of vehicles and pedestrians. Factors to be considered shall be those that impact safety considerations such as the size of the development and the number of development sub-areas.
- 3) **Size.** All signs shall be no larger than necessary for visibility and legibility. Factors to be considered in determining appropriate size include topography, volume, and speed of traffic, viewing distances and angles, proximity to adjacent uses, and placement of display. In no event shall a Comprehensive Sign

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Plan contain a monument sign that exceeds by more than 50 percent any maximum height standard permitted by this Section. There shall be no limit on the amount by which a Comprehensive Sign Plan may allow a monument sign to exceed the height restrictions permitted on the site when the monument sign is placed or oriented so as to be visible only internally to the development. In no event shall a Comprehensive Sign Plan contain a wall sign that exceeds by more than 25 percent any maximum size (area) standard permitted by this Section. There shall be no limit on the amount by which a Comprehensive Sign Plan may allow a wall sign to exceed the size (area) restrictions permitted on the site when the wall sign is placed or oriented so as to be visible only internally to the development itself.

- 4) **Design Features and Materials.** Sign design themes and materials shall be compatible with the architecture, colors, and materials of the project.
- 5) **Dimensional Standards.** The Plan Commission may not increase any sign dimensional standard to greater than 50 percent of any maximum standard. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Plan Commission shall not base any decision on the message content of a sign.
- 6) **Amendments.** The Director of Public Works or his/her designee may administratively approve minor amendments to a Comprehensive Sign Plan involving non-communicative activity, where such changes are determined to have little or no visual impact and are consistent with the intent of the original approval.

6.6 – Exempt Signs

6.6.1 - Temporary Exempt Signs

No permanent or temporary sign permit is required for the erection or construction of a sign that is less than or meets the following dimensional standards.

- 1) **Size.** The maximum size of an exempt sign shall not be greater than three square feet of sign area.
- 2) **Height.** The maximum height of any exempt sign shall be no greater than three feet above the existing ground or grade level.
- 3) **Setback.** No part of any exempt sign may be closer than five feet from any street right-of-way or property line.
- 4) **Provisions.**
 - a) A maximum of two exempt signs may be displayed concurrently.
 - b) An exempt sign shall be displayed for a period not to exceed 60 days per calendar year.
 - c) No exempt sign shall be located within two feet of any electric power line, service drops or line conductors, or in any location where the Director of Public Works or his/her designee finds a reasonable danger that any electric power line would come in contact with the sign.
 - d) No exempt sign shall be located within or over any public utility easement.

[insert exempt sign graphic]

6.6.2 – Onsite Traffic Directional Signs

Onsite traffic directional signs are permitted as necessary to assist in the movement of vehicular traffic on a property for the purpose of the safety of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

- 1) **Size.** The maximum size of any onsite traffic directional sign shall not be greater than three square feet.
- 2) **Height.** The maximum height of any onsite traffic directional sign shall not be greater than three feet.
- 3) **Setback.** No part of any onsite traffic directional sign may be closer than 25 feet from any street right-of-way or property line.
- 4) **Provisions.**

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- a) No part of any onsite traffic directional sign may be located within any required landscape areas.

6.7 - Prohibited Signs

The following sign categories and types are prohibited in all zoning districts.

- 1) Flashing signs
- 2) Marquee signs
- 3) Animated signs
- 4) Obstructive signs
- 5) Off-premises signs
- 6) Signs painted directly on a building wall or fence
- 7) Portable signs
- 8) Vehicle signs
- 9) Roof signs
- 10) Projecting Signs
- 11) Streamers
- 12) Wind operated devices
- 13) Search lights
- 14) Signs affixed to utility poles or trees
- 15) Signs affixed to fire escapes or fire suppression systems
- 16) Signs creating traffic hazards
- 17) Signs erected without proper permits
- 18) Signs in the public right-of-way
- 19) Signs related to abandoned uses or activities
- 20) Unsafe signs
- 21) Outline lighting
- 22) Pole/pylon signs
- 23) Attention getting devices
- 24) Box signs

6.8 - Illegal Signs

6.8.1 - Illegal Permanent Signs

If any permanent sign has been constructed or erected or is being maintained in violation of the provisions of this Section, written notice shall be given to the occupant or property owner of the property on which the sign is located. If the occupant or property owner fails to remove or alter the permanent sign so as to comply with the standards set forth in this Section within 30 days after receipt of such notice, such sign may be removed or altered by the City and a lien placed on the property for the full cost of such action, including administration, legal and overhead costs.

6.8.2 - Illegal Temporary Signs

If any temporary sign has been constructed or erected or is being maintained in violation of the provisions of this Section, written notice shall be given to the occupant or property owner of the property on which the sign is located. If the occupant or property owner fails to remove or alter the temporary sign so as to comply with the standards set forth in this Section within 24 hours after receipt of such notice, such sign may be removed or altered by the City and a lien placed on the property for the full cost of such action, including administration, legal and overhead costs.

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6.7.3 - Illegal Signs on Public Property

If any illegal sign has been placed upon public property for any purpose, it shall be removed by the Director of Public Works or his designee, without notice.

6.9 - Existing Signs**6.9.1 - Removal or Reconstruction**

Any sign previously approved and erected shall not be altered or moved, nor shall any sign or substantial part of the sign, which is blown down, destroyed, or removed, be re-erected, reconstructed, rebuilt, or relocated unless it is made to comply with all applicable requirements of this Section.

6.9.2 - Repair

This Section shall not be construed to prevent the repair or restoration to a safe condition of any part of an existing sign when damaged by storm, accident, or other cause, as directed by the Director of Public Works or his/her designee.

6.9.3 - Relocating

Any sign that is moved to another location on the same premises shall be considered a new sign, and a permit shall be secured for any work performed in connection with securing that permit in conformance with this Section.

6.9.4 - Nonconforming Signs

Signs which do not conform to the provisions of this Section, but which complied with all applicable ordinances, rules, and regulations in effect at the time of their erection, may remain so long as the use which they advertise or identify remains; but in no case may said nonconforming signs remain after **Month, Day, Year**. A list of all nonconforming signs will be attached to the approved ordinance. No nonconforming sign shall be enlarged, reconstructed, or structurally altered or changed in any manner nor shall it be altered so as to advertise or identify any use other than the use in effect at the time it became a nonconforming sign. At any time that such nonconforming sign shall cease to advertise or identify its original use, it shall lose its nonconforming status and must be removed in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

6.10 - General Standards**6.10.1 - Illumination**

Any signs that are illuminated shall be done so only in accordance with all applicable City codes, ordinances, and regulations and with the standards as listed below.

- 1) Except as otherwise specified in this Section, a sign may be illuminated with internal or external lighting sources as follows:
 - a) Internal illumination. Signs may be illuminated internally, but only through a translucent surface from a light source from within a sign.
 - b) External illumination. Whenever an external artificial light source is used for illumination of a sign, the light source shall be located, shielded, and directed so as to not be directly visible from any public street or any adjacent property.
- 2) The illumination of a sign shall be constant in intensity and color and shall not consist of blinking, flashing, fluttering, or other illumination conveying the sense of movement.
- 3) The illumination of a sign within 300 feet of and visible from any property zoned in a residential district shall be turned off between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. every day. However, if the business to which the sign relates is in operation during said hours, then the sign may be illuminated during actual

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business hours only if such illumination does not create a public or private nuisance, as determined by the Director of Public Works or his/her designee.

- 4) The maximum lighting shall be 1,200 lumens reflecting from a white background, as measured at the surface of the sign.

6.10.2 - Changeable Copy

Changeable copy displays shall be permitted subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The area devoted to changeable copy shall not exceed 40 percent of the maximum allowed sign area.
- 2) The area of a sign devoted to changeable copy shall be part of, not in addition to, the maximum area of sign permitted.
- 3) The area of the changeable copy sign shall be enclosed within a tamperproof case.
- 4) The Director of Public Works or his/her designee shall have the right to remove any changeable copy sign that falls into disrepair or the letters of which are not changed out at least once every six months.

6.10.3 - Electronic Message Signs

Electronic message signs shall be subject to the conditions listed below:

- 1) The area devoted to the actual electronic message portion of the sign shall not exceed 40 percent of the maximum allowed sign area.
- 2) The area of the sign devoted to electronic message shall be part of, not in addition to, the maximum area of a sign permitted.
- 3) Transitions between messages shall be static and occur in no less than two-minute intervals.
- 4) Electronic messages shall be white, yellow, or other light-colored font on a black or other dark colored background.

6.11 - Construction Specifications

6.11.1 - Design Loads

All signs shall be designed in compliance with the following minimum load requirements:

- 1) **Wind loads.** All signs shall be designed and constructed to withstand wind pressures as provided in the edition of the IBC Code that has been adopted by the City.
- 2) **Earthquake loads.** All signs shall be designed and constructed to withstand earthquake loads as provided in the edition of IBC Code that has been adopted by the City.
- 3) **Electrical loads.** All sign illumination shall be designed and erected in accordance with the requirements of the National Electrical Code. No open spark or flame may be used for display purposes.
- 4) **Additional loads.** All signs shall be designed and constructed to support all additional loads per the currently adopted IBC Code.

6.11.2 - Use of Combustibles – Ornamental Features

Wood or approved plastics as provided in the most currently adopted IBC Code, or other materials of combustible characteristics similar to wood may be used for moldings, capping, nailing blocks, letters and lattice work, and for other purely ornamental features of signs.

6.11.3 - Use of Combustibles – Sign Facings

Except in covered malls, sign facings may be made of the aforesaid approved combustible plastic providing the area of such facing section is not more than 120 square feet and the wiring for the electric lighting is entirely enclosed in the sign cabinet with a clearance of not less than two inches from the facing material.

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6.11.4 - Materials

- 1) **Monument signs.** A monument sign shall not be constructed of combustible materials, except as provided in Subsections 6.10.2 and 6.10.3 of this Section. The structural frame of monument signs and posts shall not be erected of combustible materials except as provided in the currently adopted IBC Code.
- 2) **Wall signs.** Wall signs, which have an area exceeding 40 square feet, shall be constructed of metal or other approved non-combustible materials, except for nailing rails and as provided in the currently adopted IBC Code.

6.11.5 - Illuminated Signs – Certificates

All electrically illuminated signs shall be certified as to electric wiring and devices by the Director of Public Works or his/her designee, and all wiring and accessory electrical equipment shall conform to the requirements of the currently adopted National Electrical Code.

6.11.6 - Illuminated Signs – Re-lettering Signs

The requirements of this Section shall not apply to the re-lettering of illuminated signs, unless such re-lettering requires a change of wiring or piping of the sign.

6.12 - Maintenance and Inspection**6.12.1 - Maintenance**

All signs, for which a permit is required, together with all supports, braces, guys, and anchors shall be kept in repair in accordance with the provisions of this Section. When not galvanized or constructed of approved corrosion resistive, noncombustible materials, signs shall be painted when necessary to prevent corrosion, rust, peeling paint, and excessive fading. Failure of owners to keep signs maintained in good mechanical and visual repair shall be deemed a violation of this Section.

6.12.2 - Housekeeping

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the owner or lessee of every sign to maintain the immediate premises occupied by the sign in a clean condition, free of rubbish. Any landscaping surrounding the sign shall be kept trimmed and in good repair. If the landscaping installed at the time of sign approval dies, said landscaping shall be replaced immediately.

6.12.3 - Inspections

Every existing sign shall be subject to an inspection whenever the Director of Public Works or his/her designee deems it necessary. In the event an inspection demonstrates that repairs, and/or maintenance is necessary, the sign owner shall be notified and required to complete said repairs and/or maintenance within 30 days of notification. The Director of Public Works or his/her designee is authorized to grant one 30-day extension, if, upon written request, it is deemed necessary due to extenuating circumstances.

6.12.4 - Notice of Violation

If the Director of Public Works or his/her designee shall find that any sign or other advertising structure is unsafe or insecure, or is a menace to the public safety, or was, after the adoption of this Section constructed, erected, or maintained in violation of the provisions of this Section, he or she shall give written notice per the provisions of this Title. Such notice shall specify the manner of which the sign is unsafe or in violation of this Section.

6.12.5 - Unsafe Signs

If the Director of Public Works or his/her designee finds a sign that is unsafe which is an immediate peril to persons or property, he or she shall act to have the sign removed or altered summarily and without notice at the

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owner's expense. Such sign may be removed or altered by the City and a lien placed on the property for the full cost of such action, including administration, legal, and overhead costs.