

Village of Oak Park, Illinois

# Sign Code



Chapter 7: Article 7 of the Village Code  
Adopted March 23, 2009  
Amended Through March 21, 2022





VILLAGE OF OAK PARK, ILLINOIS

# SIGN CODE

Adopted – March 23, 2009

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**Revised – October 29, 2013**

(Per Ord. No. 2013-0-59 - Approved October 21, 2013) Amortization removed

**Revised – February 18, 2014**

(Per Ord. No. 2014-0-11 - Approved February 18, 2014) Identification tag

**Revised – April 22, 2014**

(Per Ord. No. 2014-0-20- Approved April 7, 2014) Awnings

**Revised – October 7, 2014**

(Per Ord. No. 2014-0-66- Approved October 6, 2014) Construction Fence Wrap

**Revised – June 6, 2016**

(Per Ord. No. 16-070\_K\_060616- Approved June 6, 2016) Sign Regulation

**Revised – September 27, 2016**

(Per Ord. No. 16-110\_E\_091916- Approved September 19, 2016) A-Frame Signs

**Revised – March 21, 2022**

(Per Ord. No. 22-18\_N\_032122)

# Chapter 7: Article 7. Sign Code

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## 7-7-1 : FINDINGS AND PURPOSE:

The following findings and purposes are hereby adopted:

- A. It is necessary for the promotion and preservation of the public health, safety and welfare of the Village that the erection, construction, location and maintenance of all signs be regulated and controlled.
- B. A multiplicity of signs is distracting to motorists and a hazard to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- C. A proliferation of off-premises signs obscures the legitimate effort of local business establishments to reasonably identify the location and nature of their businesses.
- D. It is a legitimate public purpose to limit signs in the Village to those reasonably necessary to identify local businesses. Such limitations and all other sign regulations herein are established to accomplish the following purposes:
  1. To protect public safety and welfare.
  2. To ensure adequate and appropriate identification of uses by controlling the size and number of signs.
  3. To enhance the economy and the business and industry of the Village by promoting the reasonable, orderly and effective display of signs, and encouraging better communication with the public.
  4. To protect commercial districts from sign clutter.
  5. To protect the public's ability to identify uses and premises without confusion.
  6. To limit or eliminate unnecessary distractions that may jeopardize pedestrian or vehicular traffic safety.

7. To assure the maintenance of signs.
8. To preserve and protect historic signs and signs of special significance to the Village.
9. To implement the objectives expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.
10. To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and residential and commercial architecture, one of the prime assets of the Village.
11. To control and abate the unsightly use of buildings or land.
12. To protect the property values and economic well-being of the Village.

**7-7-1.2: SCOPE:**

It is unlawful for any person to construct, maintain, display or alter or cause to be constructed, maintained, displayed or altered, a sign within the Village, except in conformance with this Code.

**7-7-2 : RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ORDINANCES:**

- A. Nothing herein contained shall be deemed or construed to modify or alter the provisions of any other chapter of the Village Code. In the event of a conflict between the requirements of this Code and those of any other provision of the Village Code, the latter shall prevail and control.
- B. If any section, paragraph, clause, phrase or part of this Code is, for any reason, held invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Code; and, the application of these provisions to any persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

**7-7-3 : DEFINITIONS:**

For the purpose of this Code, certain words and terms are hereby defined:

**A-FRAME SIGN:** A temporary advertising device ordinarily in the shape of an "A," or some variation thereof, located on the ground, not permanently attached and easily movable, and usually two-sided. Also called a "sandwich board."

**ABANDONED OR OBSOLETE SIGN:** A sign which no longer correctly directs or exhorts any person, advertises a business, lessor, owner, product, activity conducted or available on the premises where the sign is displayed.

**ALLEY:** A private or dedicated public way that affords only a secondary means of access to contiguous property and is less than thirty-three (33) feet in width.

**ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT:** A prominent or significant part or feature of a building, structure, or site.

**ATTENTION GETTING DEVICE:** A display that utilizes motion or flashing lights to attract attention of passers-by. Examples include strings of pennants, banners or streamers, advertising flags, clusters of flags, strings of twirlers or propellers, flares, balloons, strobe lights, and sequential flashing "runner" lights.

**AWNING:** A structure of canvas, canvas-like or other materials extended over a window or door or over a patio, deck, etc. as a protection from the sun or rain.



*A-frame sign*

**BALLOON SIGN:** Any sign that is any lighter-than-air or gas-filled balloon attached by means of a rope or tether to a definite or fixed location. A display designed to inflate or move by use of a fan or blower is also considered a balloon sign. Balloons used as temporary attention-getting devices in conjunction with another sign which are no more than eighteen (18) inches in diameter, are not considered balloon signs.

**BANNER SIGN:** Any sign printed or displayed upon cloth or other flexible material with or without frames.

**BARBER POLE:** A pole painted in spiral stripes used as a sign by a barber shop or hairdresser for advertisement.

**BUILDING:** Any covered structure securely affixed to the land which is designed for the support, shelter, enclosure or protection of persons, animals, chattels or other tangible property.

**BUILDING OFFICIAL:** Chief Building Official or his or her designee.

**BULLETIN BOARD:** A sign which accommodates manually changeable copy which displays information on activities and events on the premises.

**CANOPY:** Any structure, moveable or stationary, attached to and deriving its support from the side of a building or structure for the purpose of shielding a platform, stoop or sidewalk from the elements.



*Canopy sign*

**CODE:** Chapter 7, Article 7 of the Village Code entitled "Sign Code."

**CONSTRUCTION FENCE WRAP:** A temporary sign made of weather-resistant material such as canvas, nylon or vinyl-coated fabric, placed on a construction fence to conceal a construction site and promote a building being constructed.

**CONSTRUCTION SIGN:** A temporary sign which functions to denote the architect, contractor or engineer, placed on a lot that is the construction site of such architect, contractor or engineer.

**CURB LINE:** The edge of the roadway pavement for any street or alley.

**DIRECTIONAL SIGN:** Any on-premises, be it a pole, monument or other type of sign, providing directions necessary or convenient for motorist or pedestrians coming onto premises including signs marking entrances and exits, parking areas, loading zones or circulation directions.

**DIRECTORY SIGN:** A sign which functions to identify the location of occupants of a building or group of buildings which are divided into rooms or suites used as offices or studios.

**DWELLING, MULTIPLE-FAMILY:** A building having three (3) or more dwelling units.

**DWELLING, SINGLE-FAMILY:** A building having one (1) dwelling unit.

**DWELLING, TWO-FAMILY:** A building having two (2) dwelling units.

**ELECTRONIC SIGN:** Signs whose alphabetic, pictographic or symbolic informational content can be changed or altered on a fixed display screen composed of electrically illuminated segments. For the purposes of this Code, electronic signs within ground or wall signs are regulated as one (1) of the two (2) following types:

- A. Electronic Display Screen. A sign, or portion of a sign, that displays an electronic image or video, which may or may not include text. This definition includes television screens,

plasma screens, digital screens, flat screens, LED screens, video boards and holographic displays.

- B. **Electronic Message Sign.** Any sign, or portion of a sign, that uses changing lights to form a sign message or messages in text form wherein the sequence of messages and the rate of change is electronically programmed and can be modified by electronic processes. "Time and Temperature Devices" are not considered electronic message signs.

**EXTERIOR ILLUMINATED SIGN:** Any sign, any part of which, is illuminated from an exterior artificial light source mounted on the sign, another structure or the ground.

**FLASHING SIGN:** A sign with blinking or flashing lights, or other illuminating devices that change light intensity, brightness or color, traveling/chasing or blinking lights, or rotating beacons are prohibited. Electronic signs are not considered flashing signs; however, the messages or images on an electronic sign may not imitate flashing signs.

**FRONTAGE:** All the property on one side of a street between two (2) intersecting streets measured along the street line, or, if the street is a dead-end, then all the property abutting on one side between an intersecting street and the dead-end of the street.

**GHOST SIGN:** A painted wall sign that remains from an earlier time or advertises the use of a building that provides evidence of the history of the use of the building or activities of the community. A "Ghost Sign" is not considered an off-premise sign.



*Ghost sign*

**GRADE:** Grade is measured as the average level of the finished surface of the ground adjacent to the exterior walls of the structure. Grade is used as the starting point to measure height. For purposes of this Code, any wall approximately parallel to and not more than twenty (20) feet from a street line is to be considered as adjoining the street.

- A. For buildings having walls adjoining one street only, "grade" is defined as the elevation of the sidewalk at the midpoint of the wall adjoining the street.
- B. For buildings having walls adjoining more than one street, "grade" is defined as the average of the elevation of the sidewalk at the midpoints of all walls adjoining the streets.
- C. For buildings having no wall adjoining the street, "grade" is defined as the average level of the finished surface of the ground adjacent to the exterior walls of the building.
- D. Where no sidewalk exists, the grade shall be established by the Village Engineer.

**GROUND FLOOR:** Any floor that is not more than three (3') feet above or below grade.

**GROUND SIGN:** A sign that is attached to a completely self-supporting structure. A ground sign may be a pole or monument sign. See "Sign, Ground – Monument" and "Sign, Ground – Pole" below.



*Monument Sign*

- A. Sign, Ground – Monument. Any sign, other than a pole sign, placed upon or supported by the ground independently of any other structure. Ground monument signs are typically mounted on a masonry base. As distinguished from a ground pole sign, the sign base of any monument sign must be a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the width of the sign face that is to be situated upon the base. A sign base less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the width of the sign face is considered a ground pole sign.
- B. Sign, Ground – Pole. A sign erected and maintained on one (1) or more freestanding mast(s) or pole(s) and not attached to any building, but not including a ground monument sign.



*Pole Sign*

**HOSPITAL:** A place with a full-time staff of resident licensed physicians and registered nurses and with complete facilities for the general diagnosis, treatment, and care of inpatients suffering from illness, disease, injury, deformity or other abnormal physical or mental condition and offering customary out-patient services as an accessory use.

**IDENTIFICATION SIGN:** Any sign which functions to identify an institution, occupant, apartment, residence, school or church, and not advertising any product or service.

**INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGN:** A sign illuminated by a light source, either incandescent, fluorescent, neon or other light that is enclosed by the sign panel or within the sign.

**LOT:** A zoning lot, except as the context herein shall indicate a lot of record.

**LOT OF RECORD:** A single lot which is part of a subdivision or re-subdivision which has been recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Cook County, Illinois.

**LOT, ZONING:** A parcel of land, at least one lot line of which is a street line, which is located within a single block, and which is or will be used, developed or built upon as a unit. A zoning lot may or may not coincide with a lot of record.

**LOT LINE:** A boundary of a zoning lot.

**MENU BOARD:** A device which functions to list items for sale at a drive-thru restaurant.

**MOVING SIGN:** A sign or other advertising structure with moving, revolving or rotating parts or visible mechanical movement of any kind, including wind-activated signs. Clocks are not considered signs with moving parts.

**MURAL:** A picture or photograph painted or applied directly on a wall and which in no way identifies a product.

**NONCOMMERCIAL MESSAGE:** A message that does not direct attention to a business or to a service or commodity for sale, and is typically of a political, religious, or ideological nature.

**OBSCENE SIGN:** A sign which is found to meet the three (3) established criteria of obscenity: 1) prurient in nature; 2) devoid of scientific, political, educational or social value; and 3) a violation of local community standards.

**OFF-PREMISES SIGN:** Any sign which directs attention to a business, service, product or entertainment not sold or offered or only incidentally sold or offered on the premises on which the sign is located.

**PENNANT SIGN:** Any geometric shaped cloth, fabric or other lightweight material normally fastened to a stringer, which is secured or tethered so as to allow movement of the sign.

**PERMANENT SIGN:** A sign attached to a structure or the ground which is made of materials intended for long-term use.

**POLITICAL SIGN:** A sign whose function is to draw attention to or communicate a position on any issue, candidate or measure in any national, state or local election.

**PORTABLE SIGN:** A sign which is mounted or designed to be mounted on a self-propelled or towed vehicle, and shall include, but not be limited to, mobile advertising signs attached to a trailer or other vehicle.



**PROJECTING SIGN:** A sign which extends out from a building face or wall so that the sign face is perpendicular or at an angle to the building face or wall.

**ROOF SIGN:** Any sign located on or attached to and extending above the roof of a building.

**SIGN:** Any visual device or representation designed or used for the purpose of communicating a message or identifying a product, service, person, organization, business or event, with the use of words or characters, visible from outside the premises on which such device is located. Murals are not considered to be signs.

**SIGN AREA:** The area of the largest single face of the sign within a perimeter which forms the outside shape including any frame that forms an integral part of the display, but excluding the necessary supports or uprights on which the sign may be placed. See Section 7.7.8.A for measurement of sign area.

**SIGN FACE:** The visible sign proper including all characters and symbols, excluding essential structural elements which are not an integral part of the display.

**SIGN STRUCTURE:** Any structure or material which supports, has supported or is capable of supporting or helping maintain a sign in a stationary position, including decorative covers.

**STREET:** A right-of-way dedicated or used as a public thoroughfare or easement that affords primary means of access to contiguous property and is 33 feet or more in width.

**STREET LINE:** A lot line that is also the boundary line of the right of way of an existing or dedicated street.

**STRUCTURE:** Anything constructed or erected with a fixed location on the ground, or attached to something having a fixed location on the ground. Without limitation on the foregoing, a structure shall include buildings, fences, walls, billboards and signs.

**TEMPORARY POLE SIGN:** A freestanding sign not intended or designed for permanent display mounted on a pole or other structure, which is also temporary in construction.

**TEMPORARY SIGN:** A sign not intended or designed for permanent display.

**TEMPORARY WALL SIGN:** A temporary sign attached to a wall not intended or designed for permanent display.

**TEMPORARY WINDOW SIGN:** A temporary sign attached to or placed upon a window or door of a building intended for viewing from the exterior of such a building and not intended or designed for permanent display.

**TIME AND TEMPERATURE DEVICE:** A mechanism integrated into a sign that displays the time and/or temperature, but does not display any commercial advertising or identification.

**UNDER-AWNING SIGN:** Any sign attached to and mounted under an awning.

**UNDER-CANOPY SIGN:** Any sign attached to and mounted under a canopy.



*Under-awning sign*



**WALL SIGN:** A sign attached to, painted on or erected against the wall of a building with the face in a parallel plane of the building wall.

**WINDOW SIGN:** A sign printed on, affixed to, in contact with or etched on intended for viewing from the exterior of such a building. Any sign within twelve inches (12") of a window or the glass surface of a door, and is visible from the public street.

**7-7-4 : SIGN PERMIT:**

No sign shall be constructed, maintained, displayed or altered within the Village except pursuant to an approved sign permit, unless the sign is specifically exempt from permit requirements.

**A. Applicability:**

No sign, except those identified as exempt, shall be erected, constructed, altered or relocated without first obtaining a sign permit.

**B. Authority and Execution:**

The Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for determining compliance with this Code, and the Development Customer Services Department shall be responsible for issuing a sign permit.

**C. Permit Issuance:**

1. Upon the filing of an application with the Development and Customer Services Department for a sign permit for erection, alteration or relocation of a sign, the Development Customer Services Department shall determine whether the application is complete. If the application is not complete, the Development Customer Services shall notify the applicant of any deficiencies, and shall take no steps to process the application until the deficiencies are remedied.
2. The Development Customer Services Department shall examine the plans and specifications, and the premises upon which the proposed sign is to be erected to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Village's Building Code and all other applicable ordinances of the Village. The Development Customer Services Department shall issue a sign permit if the proposed sign complies with the requirements of this Code and all other ordinances of the Village.

**D. Approval of Electrified Signs:**

A sign for which electrical wiring and connections are to be used shall comply with the Electrical Code of the Village as a condition of granting the sign permit.

**E. Inspection:**

The Development Customer Services Department may inspect, at such times as deemed appropriate, signs regulated by this Code. The purpose of the inspection is to ascertain whether the structure is secure or not secure, whether in need of repair or removal, or in conformance with the permit application and the provisions of this Code.

**F. Revocation of Permit:**

All rights and privileges acquired under the provisions of this section are licenses revocable at any time by the Village Board. Upon the termination or revocation of the sign permit, the licensee shall remove the sign or other sign structure without cost or expense to the Village. In the event of the failure, neglect or refusal on the part of the licensee to do so, the Village may proceed to remove the same and charge the expense to the licensee.

**G. Void:**

If the work authorized under a sign permit is not completed within six (6) months after the date of issuance, the permit shall be null and void.

**H. Enforcement:**

If any sign shall be unlawfully installed, erected or maintained in violation of any of the provisions of this Code, the sign owner or other person responsible for maintaining the sign, shall, upon written notice from the Department Customer Services Department, bring such sign into conformance with this Code or remove the sign within ten (10) business days of the date of such notice.

**7-7-5 : SIGN VARIANCE:**

The Community Design Commission shall hear and decide upon requests for variances from the Village Sign Code.

**A. Determination of Need for a Variance:**

It shall be the duty of the Zoning Administrator, after an application for any sign permit, to determine and advise the applicant whether under the provisions of this Code, a sign variance is required.

**B. Preliminary Conference:**

Any applicant for a sign permit that requires a variance may file a written request for a preliminary conference with the Community Design Commission. At the conference, the Community Design Commission shall consider preliminary exterior drawings, sketches or photographic examples, landscape and site plans and materials on a specific project, and shall provide the applicant with guidance in the development of a plan which would be consistent with the requirements and purposes of this Code.

**C. Procedure:**

1. Application: An applicant for a sign permit that requires a variance shall apply to the Community Design Commission for such variance and shall submit all items as required in Paragraph 4 below. Upon receipt of such application, the Community Design Commission shall schedule a meeting where the applicant shall be given an opportunity to make a presentation and all interested parties shall be given the opportunity to comment.
2. Notice of Public Hearing: Notice of public hearings on requests for variances shall be given no more than thirty (30) days nor less than fifteen (15) days before the hearing by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the Village. Such notice shall include the time and place of the hearing, a general description of the contents of the request to be heard, and the address or location of the property to which the request applies. The published notice may be supplemented by such additional form of notice as provided by rule of the hearing body.
3. Posted Notice: Posted notice must be provided by an applicant and/or property owner and must be located on the property that is the subject of an application. The sign must be posted at a prominent location on the property, near the sidewalk or public right-of-way so that it is visible to pedestrians and motorists. Properties with more than one street frontage are required to post one sign visible on each street frontage. The required posting period must be no less than fifteen (15) days and no more than 30 days in advance of the scheduled hearing date. For the purposes of this subsection, a day is a calendar day. The sign must include the date, time, and place of the hearing/decision, purpose of such hearing/decision, and the appropriate Village personnel to contact for

additional information. The sign must be approximately 48 inches by forty-eight (48) inches, containing one-inch minimum typeface. The sign must be weatherproof. Failure to post a sign and/or the failure of a sign to continuously be posted before a public hearing shall not invalidate, impair, or otherwise affect any subsequent variance approval following a public hearing. The sign must, whenever possible, remain posted until a hearing is completed. An applicant is responsible for removal of a sign within ten days of the issuance of a variance decision.

4. Submittal Requirements:

At the time of the public hearing, the applicant shall provide the Commission with the following documents depicting exterior design features:

- a. Drawings which shall include plans, elevations, and site plans.
- b. Landscaping and screening plans (when appropriate).
- c. Renderings and specifications for signs.
- d. A statement as to kind, color and texture of materials.
- e. All documents shall be drawn to scale.

5. Decision: Based upon the findings of fact in Paragraph D below, the Community Design Commission shall render its decision within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing and shall notify the Zoning Administrator, or his/her designee, and the applicant of its decision. The concurring vote of a majority of the members of the Community Design Commission shall be necessary to grant a variance. The order of the Commission shall be by written resolution and contain its findings of fact.

6. Inspection Upon Completion: Upon the granting of a variance, the exterior drawings, sketches, landscape and site plans, renderings and materials upon which the variance was granted shall be turned over to the Zoning Administrator whose responsibility it shall be to determine that, upon completion, there have been no deviations from the approval regarding sign design, aesthetics, or regulations contained within this Code. The Development Customer Services Department Building will be responsible for inspecting the built sign plans and built sign to ensure that it does not deviate from this and other Village Codes related to structural, electrical, and any other regulations contained in this or other Village Codes. Such deviations shall constitute a violation of this Code, in which event the Zoning Administrator or Development Customer Services Department may stop work on the project in the same manner as for a violation of the Village Code. Work may not be resumed until such deviations are corrected.

7. It shall be the duty of the person to whom a variance has been granted to comply with the requirements of the variance and to obtain such inspections as are necessary to assure compliance. The Building Official shall give notice to said person of any deficiencies found to exist. Failure to correct any deficiencies within ten (10) days after receipt of notification of such deficiency shall constitute a violation of this Code.

**D. Findings of Fact:**

After hearing and considering the materials presented, the Community Design Commission shall grant a variance if it finds that:

1. The applicant's plans are substantially consistent with the design criteria of this Code.
2. The proposed exterior design features of the sign are suitable and compatible with the character of neighboring buildings and structures existing or under construction and with the character of the neighborhood and the applicable zoning district, and enhance the environment of the Village.

3. The exterior design features of the sign will not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the Village.
4. The exterior design features of the sign will not cause a substantial depreciation in the property values in the neighborhood.

**E. Appeal:**

1. Within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a denial of a variation, the applicant and/or his or her representative may appeal the Commission's decision to the Village Board. The Village Board, within forty-five (45) days of the applicant filing his or her appeal, shall affirm, reverse or modify the decision of the Commission after due consideration of the facts contained in the record, which the Commission shall submit to the Village Board within ten (10) working days of the filing of the appeal. The Board of Trustees may receive comments on the contents of the record, orally at the meeting or in writing, not less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which the Board will first consider the appeal but shall not consider any new matters that were not presented during the Commission hearings.
2. The Village shall, within seven (7) days of its decision, advise the applicants and the Commission, in writing, of its final decision and shall direct the Village Manager to advise all affected departments of the Village government.
3. The failure of the Village Board to affirm, modify or reverse the decision of the Commission within forty-five (45) days of the applicant filing his or her appeal shall be considered as an affirmance by the Village Board of the decision of the Commission and a denial of the appeal, and the Commission shall so notify the applicant and the affected departments of the Village government.  
The decision of the Village Board will be the final administrative decision of the Village.

**F. Validity and Extension of Time:**

1. No order granting a variance shall be valid longer than twelve (12) months from the date the approval was granted unless an application for building permit is filed within such period or the sign is completely installed within such period.
2. The Village Board may grant one (1) additional extension of time not exceeding twelve (12) months, upon written application made within the initial twelve (12) month period, without further notice or hearing. The right to so extend said time shall not include the right to grant additional relief by expanding the scope of the variance.

**G. Amendments to Approved Variances:**

Amendments to a variance may be obtained by application in the same manner as provided for an original variance.

**7-7-6 : MASTER SIGN PLAN:**

For new commercial development with multiple tenants, where more than one (1) wall sign, awning or canopy is proposed, the applicant must submit a Master Sign Plan for review and approval by the Zoning Administrator. The purpose of a Master Sign Plan is to coordinate signs on multi-tenant buildings, and create a plan that establishes a building or site's overall sign design, which then provides direction to future tenants. A Master Sign Plan must include, at a minimum, criteria and specifications for general appearance, location, lighting, and approved construction materials.

## **7-7-7 : ESTABLISHMENT OF SIGN OVERLAY DISTRICTS:**

### **A. Sign Overlay Districts:**

The following Sign Overlay Districts are established, and are mapped in section 7.7.7.C:

#### **1. Residential Sign Overlay District:**

The purpose of the Residential Sign Overlay District is to ensure proper regulation of signs common to residential areas for both limited non-residential uses that need to identify their location and services, and the variety of temporary and non-commercial signs residents may require, provided in a manner that is not contrary to the established predominant residential character of the district.

#### **2. Downtown Sign Overlay District:**

The purpose of the Downtown Sign Overlay District is to ensure that signs within the downtown are compatible with the character and image of the downtown, and provide businesses with a number of alternatives for identifying their premises and the goods and/or services sold on the premises to pedestrian and automotive patrons.

#### **3. Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay District:**

The purpose of the Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay District is to ensure that signs within these areas are able to balance the needs of commercial users located within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods to identify their premises and the goods and/or services sold on the premises without negative impact to the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Signs within the neighborhood commercial areas are to be primarily oriented toward the pedestrian.

#### **4. Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay District:**

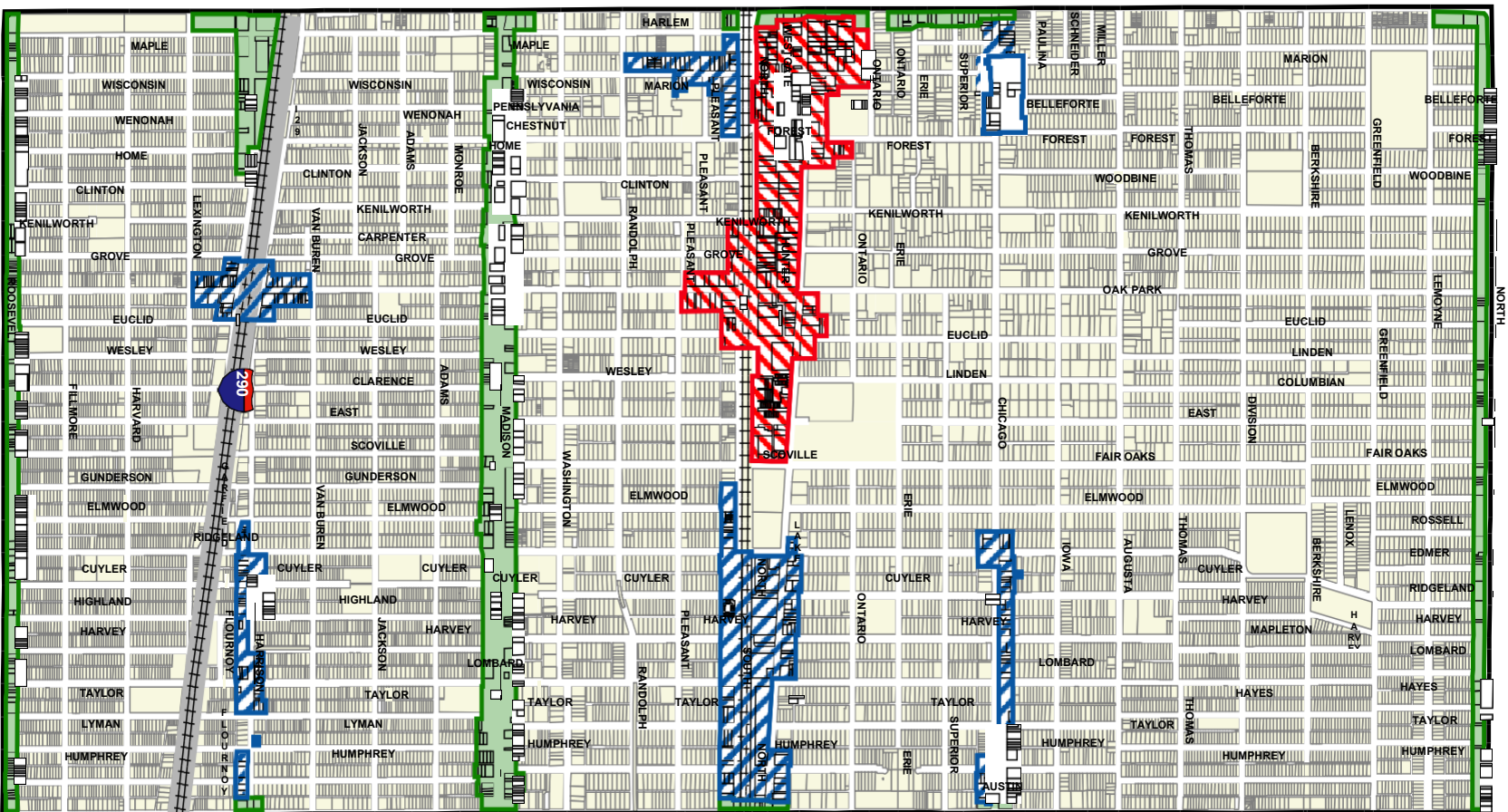
The purpose of the Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay District is to ensure that signs located along major arterials provide an effective means of identifying their premises and the goods and/or services sold on the premises, as well as presenting a positive and coordinated appearance along the roadway. Signs within the corridor commercial areas are to be primarily oriented toward the automobile.

### **B. Hospital Use:**






A hospital that falls within any of the Sign Overlay Districts established is subject to the regulations for a hospital, as defined in this Code, provided under Section 7.7.17 below.

### **C. Sign Overlay District Location:**

The Sign Overlay Districts are shown in Figure 7.7.7-1.



**Legend**

-  Village of Oak Park Boundary
-  Residential Sign Overlay District
-  Downtown Sign Overlay District
-  Neighborhood Sign Overlay District
-  Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay District

\*Data Source: Village of Oak Park



Figure: 7.7.7-1

# Sign Overlay Districts Map

Sign Ordinance Update

March 2009

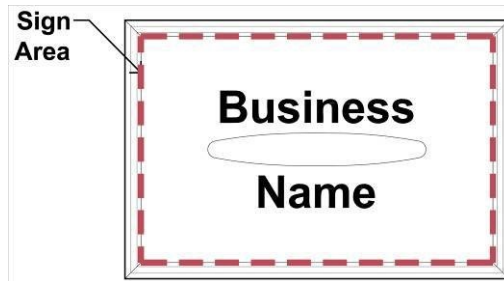
Oak Park, Illinois

**7-7-8 : DIMENSION MEASUREMENT:**

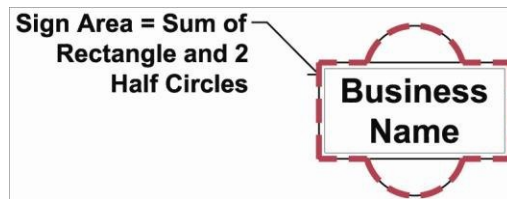
**A. Computation of Sign Area:**

Sign area is calculated as described in this Section.

1. For signs on a background, the entire area of the background shall be calculated for sign area, including any material or color forming the sign face or background used to differentiate the sign from the structure against which it is placed. Sign area does not include any supporting framework or bracing, unless such framework or bracing is part of the message or sign face.

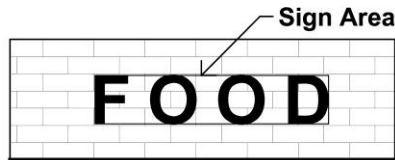


*Illustration of sign area for 7.7.8.A.1*



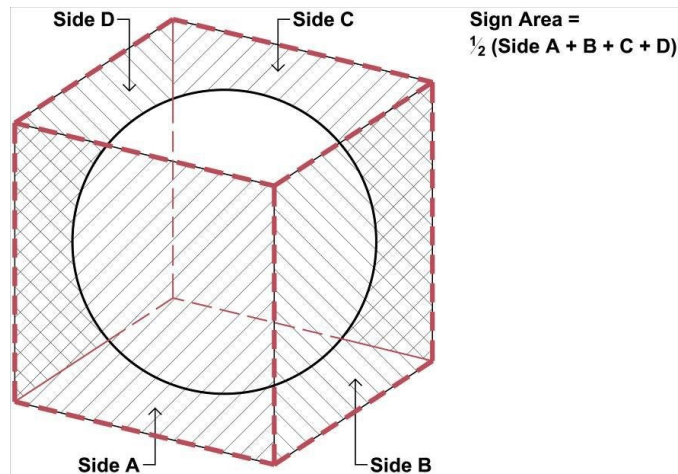
*Illustration of sign area for 7.7.8.A.1*

2. For signs consisting of freestanding letters or logos, the area of a sign face ("sign area") is calculated by means of the smallest square, circle, rectangle or triangle, or combination thereof, that will encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem or other display. Sign area does not include any supporting framework or bracing, unless such framework or bracing is part of the message or sign face. Window signs printed on a transparent film and affixed to a window pane shall be considered freestanding letters or logos, provided that the portion of the transparent film around the perimeter of the sign message maintains the transparent character of the window and does not contain any items in the sign message.



*Illustration of sign area 7.7.8.A.2*

- The sign area of free-form or sculptural (non-planar) signs is calculated as fifty percent (50%) of the sum of the area of the four (4) vertical sides of the smallest cube that will encompass the sign.



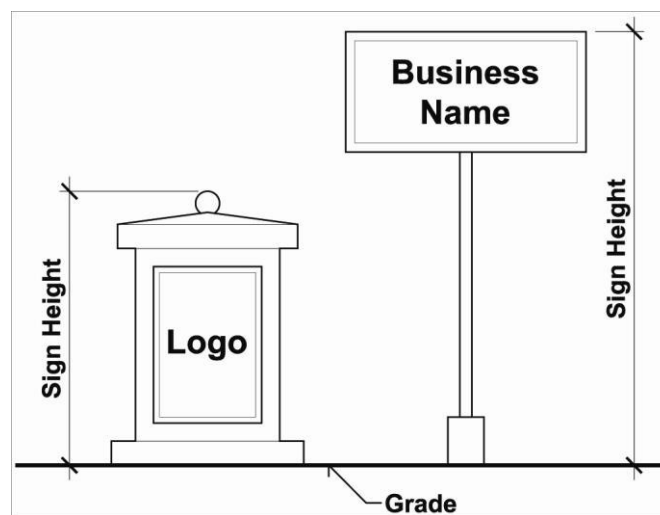
*Illustration of sign area for 7.7.8.A.3*

- For a double-faced sign, if the interior angle between two (2) sign faces is forty-five degrees (45°) degrees or less, the sign area is computed as the area of one (1) face only. If the angle between two (2) sign faces is greater than forty-five degrees (45°), the sign area is computed as the sum of the areas of the two (2) faces.

#### **B. Measurement of Sign Height:**

Sign height is measured as described below. When measuring sign height, the height of the entire structure, including decorative elements, must be included. Sign height is measured from the elevation of the grade at the midpoint of the sign.

- Pole and Monument Signs: The vertical distance measured from the grade to the highest point of the sign.



*illustration of sign height for 7.7.8.B.1*

- Signs attached to buildings: The vertical distance from the base of the building to which a sign is attached to the highest point of the sign.



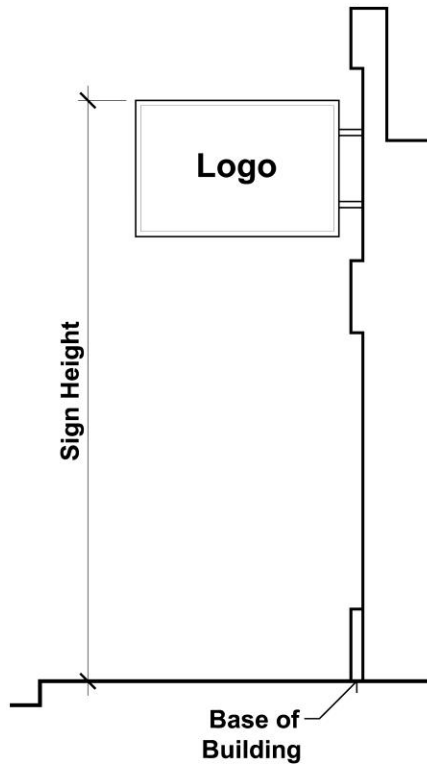


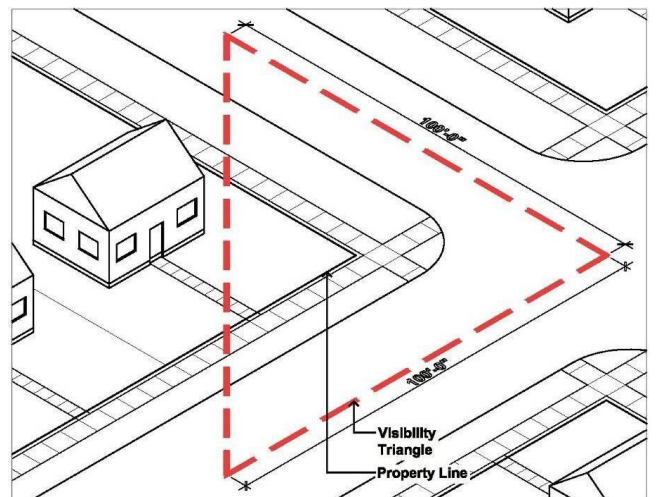
Illustration of sign height for 7.7.8.B.2

**7-7-9 : GENERAL CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN STANDARDS:**

The following standards apply to all signs requiring permits, unless specifically noted otherwise:

**A. Location:**

1. Only signs placed by federal, state and/or local government may be erected upon public property, unless a sign's placement has been authorized by the Village. Any sign placed on public property without authorization may be removed by the Village without notice.
2. No sign may be erected on private property without prior consent of the owner and, when applicable, issuance of a sign permit.
3. No sign mounted on the exterior of a building shall cover any windows, doors or any architectural features.
4. On a corner lot, no freestanding sign over two (2) feet tall may be placed within the clear sight area. The clear sight area, as defined in Chapter 25, Article 1, Section 8 of the Village Code, is a triangle with one (1) point at the intersection of the intersecting streets' centerlines, and the other two (2) points located on each street's centerline one-hundred (100) feet away from the intersection of said centerlines. The clear sight area is illustrated below.



## B. Sign Structure and Installation:

Supports and braces shall be an integral part of the sign design. Supports or braces shall be hidden from public view to the extent technically feasible. All signs attached to a building shall be installed and maintained so that wall penetrations are watertight and the structure does not exceed allowable stresses of supporting materials. All fasteners used to attach signs to a structure or building shall be properly sized for the design loads and material of the support, have a minimum cross-section diameter of one-quarter inch, and be made of corrosion resistant material.

## C. Design Loads (Wind, Direct, and Snow):

All signs and awnings must be designed and constructed to withstand their self-weight (dead load), a wind pressure of no less than thirty (30) pounds per square foot, snow loads as required by the Village Code, and ASCE/SEI minimum design loads for buildings and other structures.

## D. Illumination:

1. Any sign illumination, including gooseneck reflectors and internally illuminated signs, and all electronic signs must be designed, located, shielded and directed to prevent the casting of glare or direct light upon roadways and surrounding properties, or the distraction of motor vehicle operators or pedestrians in the public right-of-way. In the case of internally illuminated signs, the sign face must function as a filter for any illumination.
2. No sign illumination shall exceed one (1) foot candle of illumination at the property line, except for projecting signs and wall signs where illumination shall not exceed one (1) foot candle at its face.
3. The use of neon lighting as an accent is permitted for projecting, window and wall signs in the Downtown, Neighborhood Commercial and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts, subject to the following:
  - a. Neon lighting shall be used as an accent material on projecting and wall signs, such as for letters, logos and/or sign details. No projecting, window or wall sign may be entirely illuminated with neon.
  - b. Neon lighting on projecting and wall signs shall not be illuminated during the daylight hours. When lit, neon lighting must be continuously illuminated. Flashing neon is prohibited.
  - c. Neon lighting on projecting and wall signs shall not be combined with any reflective materials (e.g., mirrors, polished metal, highly-glazed tiles, or other similar materials) that would cause glare and increase the spread of light.



*Illustration of neon as a lighting accent for wall and projecting signs*

4. Any lighting, either incandescent, fluorescent, neon or other light source, including strip lighting, for outlining buildings or elements, such as doors and windows is prohibited.

5. Any sign that uses illumination shall be turned off while the related business is not open to the public for regular distribution of goods or services.

**E. Landscaping:**

All ground signs must be landscaped at the base of the sign in accordance with the following:

1. Landscaping must extend a minimum of two (2) feet from the sign base on all sides. All landscaping must be maintained in good condition, and free and clear of rubbish and weeds. Landscaping around the base of a sign is included in the total amount of landscaping required on a site, if applicable.
2. Ground signs (monument or pole) must be landscaped with small shrubs a minimum of eighteen (18) inches in height at planting. The remainder of the landscaped area must be planted with perennials, turf or another groundcover. If the ground sign is designed with a decorative base, landscaping requirements may be waived as part of sign permit approval.

**F. Glass:**

Glass forming any part of a sign must be safety glass.

**G. Lettering:**

All letters, figures, characters or representations in cut-out or irregular form, maintained in conjunction with, attached to, or superimposed upon any sign must be safely and securely built or attached to the sign structure.

**H. Items of Information:**

1. All signs must limit the number of items of information on any single sign face to no more than six (6) items to prevent traffic hazards for passing motorists and to minimize the cluttered appearance of signs.
2. Each piece of information on a sign shall be defined as an item of information. For example, each of the following would be defined as one (1) item of information: a telephone number, the name of the business, even if multiple words, or the business logo. If the sign advertises products or services, each product or service would be one (1) item of information. The street number address of the business is not counted as an item of information.



*Illustration of number of items of information for 7.7.9.H.2*

3. In the case of an electronic sign, the electronic portion of the sign counts as one (1) item of information. Changeable message signs, where the items of information are changed manually, are also counted as one (1) item of information. For a sign that contains a time and temperature component, the time and temperature component shall not be counted as one (1) item of information.
4. All signs on a zoning lot must be related to goods and/or services sold or offered on the premises, with the exception of non-commercial or political signs.
5. Ground signs for multi-tenant commercial buildings used to advertise which tenants are located within the development, are limited to one (1) item of information per tenant within the development, in addition to the name and address of the development.
6. Directory signs and hospital signs are exempt from the items of information limitation.

**I. Maintenance:**

All signs shall be kept and maintained in a safe, neat and orderly condition and appearance, and shall be repainted or otherwise maintained periodically by the owner to prevent corrosion or deterioration caused by the weather, age or any other condition, and to keep the same in a safe, neat and orderly condition and appearance. All signs must be maintained to prevent any kind of safety hazard, including faulty sign structures, a fire hazard or an electrical shock hazard.

**J. Design Criteria:**

The purpose of these design criteria is to establish a checklist of those items relative to signs that affect the physical aspect of Oak Park's environment. Pertinent to signs is the design of the sign and its relation to building and structures, planting, street furniture and miscellaneous other objects.

The following criteria are not intended to restrict imagination, innovation or variety, but rather to assist in focusing on design principles that can result in creative solutions that will develop a satisfactory visual appearance within the Village, preserve property values and promote the public health, safety and welfare.

1. Every sign shall have good scale and proportion in its design and in its visual relationship to buildings and surroundings.
2. Sign materials, size, color, lettering, location and arrangement shall be an integral part of site and building design.
3. The colors, materials and lighting of every sign shall be restrained and harmonious.
4. The number of graphic elements on a sign shall be held to the minimum needed to convey the sign's major message, and shall be composed in proportion to the area of the sign face. Text should be kept to a minimum.
5. Lighting for signs shall be in harmony with the signs' and the project's design. If external lighting is used, it should be arranged so the light source is shielded from view.
6. Sign supports and braces shall whenever possible be an integral part of the sign design. Necessary supports or braces shall whenever possible be hidden from public view.

**7-7-10 : OBSOLETE, ABANDONED OR UNSAFE SIGNS:**

**A. Obsolete or Abandoned Signs:**

Any sign, whether existing on or erected after the effective date of this Code, which advertises a business no longer being conducted or a product no longer being sold in or from the premises to which the sign relates, shall be taken down and removed by the owner or agent of the building, structure or premises upon which such sign is found. Removal shall be effected within twenty (20) days after written notice from the Building and Property Standards Department. If such a sign is not removed after such twenty (20) day period, the Building and Property Standards Department is authorized to have the sign removed. Any reasonable cost incident thereto shall be filed as a lien against the property where the sign was located.

**B. Unsafe Signs:**

When any sign becomes insecure, in danger of falling, or otherwise unsafe, or if any sign shall be unlawfully installed, erected or maintained in violation of any of the provisions of this Code or any other provisions of the Village Code, the owner thereof or the person or firm maintaining same, shall, upon written notice of the Building and Property Standards Department, forthwith in the case of immediate danger, and in any case within no more than ten (10) days, make such sign conform to the provisions of this Code or remove it.

**7-7-11 : PROHIBITED SIGNS:**

It is unlawful to erect or maintain any of the following signs:

- A. Signs with flashing or blinking lights or other means not providing constant illumination, including strobe lights, moving or fixed spotlights and floodlights.
- B. Moving signs. No sign or part of any sign shall move or give the illusion of movement in any manner.
- C. Illegally-affixed signs.
- D. Permanent banners and pennants. This does not include temporary banners and pennants permitted in accordance with this Code.
- E. Roof signs.
- F. Projecting signs in the Residential Sign Overlay District.
- G. Portable signs.
- H. Signs of an obscene nature.
- I. Signs placed or painted on parked vehicles where the primary purpose is to advertise a product or service, or to direct the public to a business or activity located on or off the premises are prohibited. Signs displayed on trucks, buses or other vehicles, which are being operated and stored in the normal course of a business, such as signs indicating the owner or business that are located on delivery trucks, moving vans and rental trucks, are permitted, provided that the primary purpose of such vehicles is not the display of signs, and that they are parked or stored in areas appropriate to their use as vehicles. Vehicle for-sale signs are also permitted in accordance with Section 7.7.13.B.4 below.
- J. Signs which constitute a traffic hazard, including those signs that:
  - 1. Obstruct free and clear vision at any street, intersection, parking lot entrance or exit, or driveway.

2. Interfere with, obstruct the view of, or may be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device because of its position, shape or color, including signs illuminated in red, green or amber color to resemble a traffic signal.
  3. Make use of the words STOP, LOOK, DETOUR, DANGER or any other word, phrase, symbol or character in a manner that misleads, interferes with, or confuses traffic.
- K. Signs which obstruct any ingress or egress, including doors, windows or fire escapes.
- L. Off-premise signs.
- M. Any strip lighting, such as but not limited to, incandescent, fluorescent, or neon lighting visible from, or applied to, the exterior of building, doors or windows or other architectural elements is prohibited.

**7-7-12 : EXEMPT SIGNS:**

The following signs shall be allowed without a sign permit:

- A. Bulletin board. One (1) bulletin board not more than twelve (12) square feet in surface area for a place of worship, library, school or other public building, provided such sign shall be located on the same zoning lot as the principal building.
- B. Temporary Construction Sign. Temporary construction signs, subject to the regulations of subsection 7-7-13B7 of this article.
- C. Warning sign. Warning signs, such as “no trespassing,” “beware of dog,” etc., each not more than one (1) square foot in size and not to exceed four (4) per zoning lot.
- D. Official Federal, State or local government flags, banners, emblems or historical markers.
- E. Official Federal, State or local government traffic, directional and informational signs and notices issued by any court, person or officer in performance of a public duty or any other sign that is required to be posted by any government agency.
- F. Signs warning of construction excavation or similar hazards so long as the hazard exists.
- G. Holiday decorations.
- H. Political and noncommercial signs. These signs are permitted on private property only and require consent of the property owner.
- I. Temporary A-frame signs, subject to the regulations of Section 7.7.13.B.1 below.
- J. Temporary banner signs, subject to the regulations of Section 7.7.13.B.2 below.
- K. Temporary vehicle for-sale signs, subject to the regulations of Section 7.7.13.B.4 below.
- L. Temporary window signs, subject to the regulations of Section 7.7.13.B.6 below.
- M. Miscellaneous information signs. The following types of miscellaneous information signs shall be exempt from sign permit requirements:
  1. Matter appearing on gasoline pumps, and service station rate signs, including the names of grades of fuel and prices and conditions relating to prices such as full or self-service.
  2. Matter appearing on newspaper vending boxes.

3. Matter appearing on or adjacent to entry doors such as PUSH, PULL, OPEN and/or CLOSED.
  4. Matter appearing on display windows or doors denoting hours of operation, credit cards accepted, and similar information.
  5. Information pertaining to the operating instructions of vending machines and automatic teller machines, including bank logos on the face of ATM machines.
- N. Signs showing the location of public telephones and signs placed by utilities to show the location of underground facilities.
- O. Directory signs no more than six (6) square feet in surface area.
- P. In all Sign Overlay Districts, one (1) real estate sign no more than sixteen (16) square feet in surface area for condominium multiple-family dwellings and in the Downtown, Neighborhood Commercial and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts, one (1) commercial real estate sign no more than sixteen (16) square feet in surface area per street frontage, which advertises the sale or rental of the premises on the lot upon which the sign is located.
- Q. Traffic-Control Signs. Traffic-control signs and other such signs, other than advertising signs, designed for the public safety and convenience, may be authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Village.
- R. Accessibility Signs. All signs required for compliance with accessibility acts and codes.
- S. Directional Sign. Any on-premises sign, be it a pole, monument or other type of sign, providing directions necessary or convenient for motorist or pedestrians coming onto premises including signs marking entrances and exits, parking areas, loading zones or circulation directions. Except when for hospital use, directional signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet and, if a pole or monument sign type, shall not be higher than four (4) feet in height.
- T. Barber Pole. A pole painted in spiral stripes used as a sign by a barber shop or hairdresser for advertisement. One (1) pole sign no more than two (2) feet in length and projecting no more than 12 inches from a building wall to which it is attached.
- U. Construction Fence Wrap Signs. Construction fence wrap signs, subject to the regulations of subsection 7-7-13B7 of this article.
- V. Murals. Murals as defined in section 7-7-3 above.

**7-7-13 : TEMPORARY SIGNS:**

**A. General Regulations for all Temporary Signs:**

1. Any sign listed in Section 7.7.11 (Prohibited Signs) is prohibited.
2. Temporary signs must be related to goods and/or services sold on the premises, except for non-commercial or political messages. Temporary off-premises signs are prohibited.
3. No temporary sign may be illuminated.
4. All temporary signs must remain in good condition during the display period. Throughout the display period, corrective action must be taken immediately should there be any problems with the appearance, condition or maintenance of the sign and/or support hardware.
5. Certain types of temporary signs are controlled by the provisions of Section 7.7.12 (Exempt Signs) above. Those temporary signs not listed in Section 7.7.12 are controlled by these

provisions.

**B. Regulations by Temporary Sign Type:**

Temporary signs must comply with the regulations contained in Paragraph A (General Regulations for all Temporary Signs) above and the following:

**1. Temporary A-Frame Signs**

- a. Temporary A-frame signs are permitted only within the Downtown and Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay Districts.
- b. Temporary A-frame signs are limited to six (6) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height.
- c. The use of temporary A-frame signs is limited to business hours only. Signs must be stored indoors at all other times. Temporary A-frame signs must not be used outdoors when high winds or heavy snow conditions exist.
- d. Only one (1) temporary A-frame sign is permitted per business. A minimum twenty (20) foot separation is required between all temporary A-frame signs.
- e. A temporary A-frame sign must be placed within fifteen (15) feet of the primary entrance of the business, and must not interfere with pedestrian traffic or violate standards of accessibility as required by the ADA or other accessibility codes. Placement of temporary A-frame signs must maintain a five (5) foot sidewalk clearance at all times.
- f. Temporary A-frame signs are exempt from sign permit requirements and fees. However, the Village shall monitor compliance with this section for temporary A-frame signs placed in the public right-of-way.

If an A-frame sign is not maintained in accordance with this article, the Village may serve a notice of noncompliance to the owner of the A-frame sign that the owner must bring the A-frame sign into compliance within five (5) days of service of the notice.

If an owner fails to bring an A-frame sign into compliance within five (5) days after service of a notice, the Village is authorized to remove the A-frame sign to a secure location. The Village shall notify the A-frame sign owner that it must collect the A-frame sign from the secure location within ten (10) days following service of the notice. If the A-frame sign owner does not collect the A-frame sign from its secure location within ten (10) days following notice, the Village is authorized to dispose of the A-frame sign. The A-frame sign owner shall be liable for the Village's reasonable costs of removal and disposal.

**2. Temporary Banners:**

- a. Temporary banners are permitted for any non-residential use in any non-residential district.
- b. Temporary banners are limited to thirty-two (32) square feet in area.
- c. Only one (1) banner is permitted per zoning lot.
- d. No temporary banner may be located higher than the roofline of the building to which it is attached or, if attached to a permanent sign, higher than the sign. There must be no



encroachment into the public right-of-way.

- e. Temporary banners require a sign permit.
- f. Temporary banners are limited to a display of seven (7) days when not related to a date specific or, if date specific, may be erected no earlier than five (5) days prior to the event plus the duration of the event and must be removed within two (2) days after the event. Temporary banners may be erected on a zoning lot no more than four (4) times in a year.
- g. Temporary banners mounted on light poles or Village-owned structures within the Village are subject to the following requirements. Temporary banners mounted on light poles or Village-owned structures do not include “local government banners” as described in Section 7.7.12.D.
  - i. No banner shall be affixed to any light pole or structure except by authorization of the Department of Public Works. A sign permit and an obstruction permit are required.
  - ii. Banners may not block any public signs or lighting.
  - iii. No banner shall exceed a maximum size of thirty (30) inches in width and seventy-two (72) inches in length.
  - iv. All banners must serve a legitimate public interest and shall not contain any advertising other than that which is directed toward the specific event. Sponsorship logos may only take up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the space on the banner.
  - v. Banners shall not be in place earlier than two (2) weeks before the event and must be removed within three (3) days after the event. Seasonal banners may remain in place for up to three (3) months as long as they are still in serviceable condition. Business district banners may remain in place for up to one (1) year.
  - vi. Banner material shall be of a durable, weather-resistant material like canvas, nylon or vinyl-coated fabric. Grommets must be installed in the top and bottom corners of the banner one (1) inch above the bottom rod pocket and one (1) inch below the top rod pocket. Grommets shall be of brass construction and installed in a minimum of four (4) layers of fabric.
  - vii. If the Village must remove a banner or perform maintenance work on a banner, the cost for such work will be billed to the organization for which the banners are being installed.
  - viii. The applicant shall submit the following information to the Village as part of the sign permit application:
    - (1) The name of company that will perform the installation work.
    - (2) A sketch or copy of artwork that will appear on the banners.
    - (3) A copy of an insurance certificate naming the Village as additionally insured on the liability policy of the organization for which the banners are installed. Minimum coverage must be one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00). This insurance coverage is independent of the insurance required by the contractor installing the banners.
    - (4) The name, address and phone number of contact person for maintenance of banners or emergency relating to banners.
    - (5) A timetable for the installation and removal of banners, which must comply

with the above time limits.

**3. Temporary Pole Signs:**

- a. Temporary pole signs are permitted for any non-residential use in any non-residential district.
- b. Temporary pole signs are limited to thirty-two (32) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height.
- c. All temporary pole signs must be set back ten (10) feet from any property line.
- d. Temporary pole signs require a sign permit.
- e. Temporary pole signs are limited to a display of seven (7) days when not related to a date specific or, if date specific, may be erected no earlier than five (5) days prior to the event plus the duration of the event and must be removed within two (2) days after the event. Temporary pole signs may be erected on a zoning lot no more than four (4) times in a year.

**4. Temporary Vehicle For-Sale Signs:**

- a. Vehicles are permitted to display a “for sale” or similar sign in sales lots where the sale of new or used vehicles is permitted.
- b. A vehicle may be parked and displayed for sale, with a “for sale” sign, by a private individual at that individual’s home, including in the driveway, as well as driven and parked throughout the normal daily routine. Once the vehicle is sold, the sign must be removed.
- c. The vehicle must remain drivable with the “for sale” sign in place. Any “for sale” sign over four (4) square feet in sign area requires a sign permit.
- d. There are no time limit restrictions on vehicle “for sale” signs. Vehicle “for sale” signs are not counted toward the number of temporary signs permitted on a zoning lot.

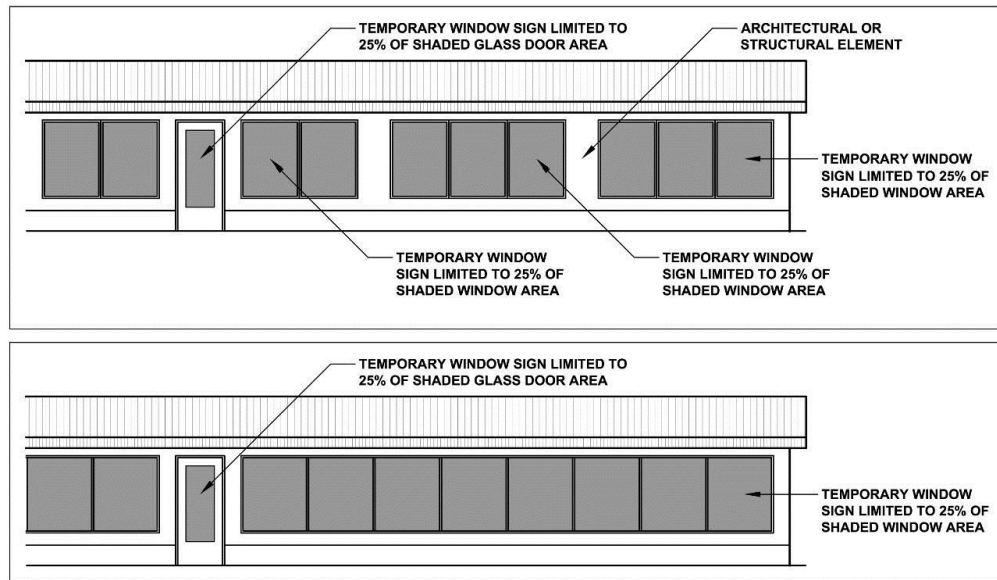
**5. Temporary Wall Signs:**

- a. Temporary wall signs are permitted for any non-residential use in any non-residential district.
- b. Temporary wall signs are limited to thirty-two (32) square feet in area.
- c. No temporary wall sign may be located higher than roofline of the building to which it is attached. There must be no encroachment into the public right-of-way. No temporary wall sign may cover windows, doors or architectural features.
- d. Temporary wall signs require a sign permit.
- e. Temporary wall signs are limited to a display of seven (7) days when not related to a date specific or, if date specific, may be erected no earlier than five (5) days prior to the event plus the duration of the event and must be removed within two (2) days after the event. Temporary wall signs may be erected on a zoning lot no more than four (4) times in a year.

**6. Temporary Window Signs:**

- a. Temporary window signs are permitted for any non-residential use in any non-residential district.

- b. Temporary window signs are limited to twenty-five percent (25%) of the window area. Window area is counted as a continuous surface until divided by an architectural or structural element. Mullions are not considered an element that divides window area.



*Illustration of window sign area 7.7.13.B.6.b*

- c. A sign attached to, placed upon or printed on the interior of a window or door of a building intended for viewing from the exterior of such a building is considered a temporary window sign.
- d. Temporary window signs are exempt from sign permit requirements.
- e. There is a thirty (30) day time limit restrictions on temporary window signs.
- f. Temporary solid window coverings intended to block interior construction activities are permitted, however, if any signage is printed on, affixed to, in contact with or etched on the window and intended for viewing from the exterior shall not exceed 25 percent of the total window area.

## 7. Temporary Construction Signs:

- a. Construction Signs. One (1) construction sign no more than sixteen (16) square feet in surface area in the Residential Sign Overlay District and no more than sixty-four (64) square feet in surface area in the Downtown, Neighborhood Commercial and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts, which denotes the architect, contractor or engineer, when placed on the zoning lot which is a construction site of such architect, contractor or engineer.
- b. Construction Fence Wrap Signs. Construction fence wrap signs are permitted.
  - (1) Temporary construction fence wrap signs require approval by the Zoning Administrator.
  - (2) The text for a temporary construction fence wrap is limited to twenty-five percent (25%) of the surface area of the construction fence. Renderings of the building under construction shall not be included in the area calculation.
  - (3) Temporary construction fence wrap signs are limited to a display of eighteen (18) months after initial approval by the Zoning Administrator for the sign. If construction of an applicable building begins within the eighteen (18) month display period, a sign may continue to be displayed for an additional nine (9) months after the expiration of the eighteen (18) month period. If construction does not commence

within eighteen (18) months, the sign shall be removed within seven (7) calendar days after the expiration of the eighteen (18) month display period. If a sign is continued to be displayed after said period, the property shall be subject to a \$500.00 fine for every seven (7) calendar days that the sign is displayed.

- (4) The wrap material shall be of a durable, weather-resistant material like canvas, nylon, or vinyl-coated fabric.
  - (5) Temporary construction fence wrap signs may include the following content:
    - (A) A rendering, elevation drawing of building, or zoning diagram of the building exterior;
    - (B) Anticipated project completion date;
    - (C) The name, address, and telephone number of the owner of the property;
    - (D) The name and telephone number of the general contractor; and
    - (E) General information regarding the price and size of units and other similar information.
  - c. Construction Window Signs: Temporary solid window coverings intended to block interior construction activities are permitted; however, if any signage is printed on, affixed to, in contact with or etched on the window and intended for viewing from the exterior shall not exceed 25 percent of the total window area.
8. Temporary Attention Getting Devices: Attention getting devices are permitted for special events and for new business openings subject to the following:
- a. Attention getting devices for special events may be erected on a zoning lot no more than four (4) times in a year beginning on the first date that a permit is issued for an attention getting device.
  - b. Attention getting devices are limited to a display of thirty (30) days when not related to a date specific or, if date specific, may be erected no earlier than five (5) days prior to the event plus the duration of the event and must be removed within two (2) days after the event.
  - c. Attention getting devices are limited to a display of sixty (60) days in conjunction with a new business opening.

#### **7-7-14 : GROUND SIGN CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN STANDARDS:**

Ground signs are permitted subject to the following:

- A. Ground signs are permitted only in the districts listed in Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this section, subject to the regulations of Tables 1 and 2 and this Code.
- B. One (1) ground sign is permitted per street frontage of a zoning lot, whether a monument or pole sign. In addition to a ground sign, drive-through establishments are permitted one (1) menu board sign, whether constructed as a pole or monument sign, no more than forty (40) square feet in sign area, no more than six (6) feet in height and no less than twenty (20) feet from any lot line.
- C. The primary support of a pole sign must be erected in such a manner that at least forty-two (42) inches of the length of the support is underground. The Development Customer Services Department may require proper documentation from a structural engineer or manufacturer that indicates proper installation instructions for the sign, as well as the sign's ability to withstand wind pressures.

D. No part of any ground sign may be located within the public right-of-way.

E. Time and temperature devices are permitted as part of ground pole and monument signs. Such devices are included in all calculations of sign area.

TABLE 1 GROUND SIGNS - MONUMENT SIGNS				
SIGN OVERLAY DISTRICTS	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height	Minimum Setback	Additional Regulations
Residential Sign Overlay District	32 sq. ft.	6 ft.	18"	Permitted for multi-family and non-residential uses only
Downtown Sign Overlay District	32 sq. ft.	6 ft.	18"	N/A
Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay District	32 sq. ft.	6 ft.	18"	N/A
Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay District	48 sq. ft.	8 ft.	18"	N/A

TABLE 2 GROUND SIGNS - POLE SIGNS				
SIGN OVERLAY DISTRICTS	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Sign Height	Minimum Setback	Additional Regulations
Residential Sign Overlay District	24 sq. ft.	5 ft.	18"	Permitted for multi-family and non-residential uses only
Downtown Sign Overlay District	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay District	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay District	50 sq. ft.	20 ft.	18"	N/A

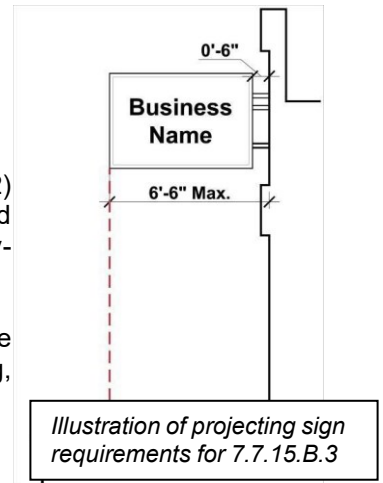
**7-7-15 : BUILDING SIGN CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN STANDARDS:**

**A. Maximum Surface Area; All Exterior Signs:**

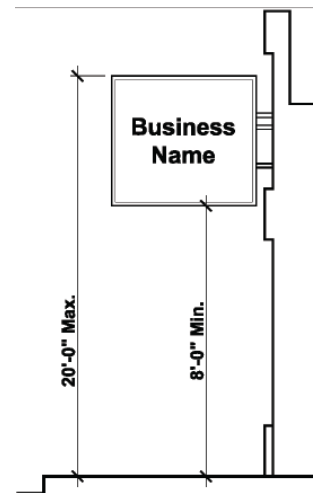
1. The surface area of all exterior signs, including permanent window signs, shall not exceed, in the aggregate, three (3) square feet per lineal foot of width of lot for the first one hundred (100) lineal feet, and one square foot per lineal foot of width of lot for each lineal foot in excess of one hundred (100).
2. Width of lot shall be measured at the front lot line; provided, however, for lots having more than one street line, width of the lot shall be measured at the street line of the greatest dimension lying in a frontage which is wholly within a commercial or industrial district; or, in the street line of the shortest dimension if the lot has no street line lying in a frontage which is wholly within a commercial district.

**B. Projecting Sign: Projecting signs are permitted in the Downtown, Neighborhood Commercial and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts, subject to the following. Projecting signs are prohibited in the Residential Sign Overlay District.**

1. The maximum area of a projecting sign is as follows:
  - a. Downtown Sign Overlay District: Twenty-four (24) square feet
  - b. Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay District: Twenty-four (24) square feet
  - c. Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay District: Thirty-two (32) square feet, except for lots fronting on Madison Street and Garfield Street, where the maximum allowable area is twenty-four (24) square feet



2. One (1) projecting sign per ground floor establishment with frontage on a public street is permitted. In the case of a multi-tenant building, one (1) additional projecting sign identifying the name of the multi-tenant development is permitted.
3. A projecting sign must be pinned away from the wall at least six (6") inches. Projecting signs shall not project more than six and one-half feet (6.5') from the face of the building to which they are attached, including the area between the sign and the face of the building, and in no event more than within two feet (2') of any the curb line of any street or alley. Provided, however, where more than one-half (1/2) of the frontage in a block is located in a residence district, no sign, other than a sign permitted in a residence district, shall project more than twelve inches (12") beyond the face of the building or structure, unless a yard is provided, the depth of which is in excess of that required in the business district, in which case, a sign may project into the non-required portion of such yard, but in no event shall such sign be closer to the street line than:
  - a. The required residential setback; or
  - b. The actual average setback, for the residentially-zoned portion of the frontage, whichever is less. Unless such sign is one hundred feet (100') or more from the residentially-zoned property, then said sign shall project not more than six feet six inches (6'6") into the public right of way and in no event more than within two feet (2') of any street or alley.



*Illustration of projecting sign requirements for 7.7.15.B.4*

4. The bottom of any projecting sign must be at least eight (8) feet above the sidewalk or thoroughfare. The top of a projecting sign may be no higher than twenty (20) feet above the sidewalk or thoroughfare; providing that no projecting sign affixed to a building may project higher than the building height, including the sign support structure.
5. Projecting signs, including frames, braces, and supports must be designed by a licensed structural engineer or manufacturer. No projecting sign may be secured with external wire, chains, cables, strips of wood or nails nor may any projecting sign be hung or secured to any other sign. Any removable part of a projecting sign, such as the cover of a service opening, must be securely fastened internally by chains or hinges.
6. External illumination, such as goose-neck type lighting, is permitted on projecting signs provided that illumination is concentrated on the area of the sign face only. Projecting signs may be internally illuminated in the Downtown and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts only, provided internally illuminated signs are constructed with an opaque background with only letters, logos and/or details as translucent features.
7. Time and temperature devices are permitted as part of projecting signs. Such devices

must be included in all calculations of sign area.

### **C. Window Sign (Permanent):**

Permanent window signs are permitted in the Downtown, Neighborhood Commercial and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts and for non-residential uses in the Residential Sign Overlay District, subject to the following.

1. Permanent window signs affixed to or painted on the inside of a window shall be considered to be wall signs subject to all such regulations and shall occupy no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the surface of each window area. Window area is counted as a continuous surface until divided by an architectural or structural element. Mullions are not considered an element that divides window area.
2. The total area of all temporary and permanent window signs must not occupy more than fifty percent (50%) of the total window area. Temporary window signs are subject to the regulations of Section 7.7.13.B.6.b (Temporary Signs).
3. Neon window signs are considered a window sign and must be included in the twenty-five percent (25%) limitation. However, no more than fifteen percent (15%) of total window area may be comprised of neon window signs. Neon window sign area is measured by the height and width of the sign. Neon window signs are prohibited in all Residential Sign Overlay Districts.
4. All ground floor street-side building facades must allow pedestrians to view goods and activities inside and encourage walking and browsing. Substantially opaque, frosted, etched, tinted, black, and reflective mirror glass are prohibited.

### **D. Wall Sign:**

Permanent wall signs are permitted in the Downtown, Neighborhood Commercial and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts and for non-residential uses in the Residential Sign Overlay District, subject to the following.

1. Within the Downtown, Neighborhood Commercial and Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay Districts, the maximum size of a wall sign shall be established at one (1) square foot per lineal foot of zoning lot frontage. Within residential districts, wall signs are permitted at a size of one (1) square foot per lineal foot of zoning lot frontage up to a maximum size of forty (40) square feet.
  - a. For an interior lot, the maximum size of a wall sign shall be established at one (1) square foot per lineal foot of zoning lot frontage as measured along the front lot line.
  - b. For a corner lot, the maximum size of a wall sign located on each building wall shall be established at one (1) square foot per lineal foot of zoning lot frontage as measured along the front or corner side lot line of that building wall. The size of a wall sign on each side of the building shall be limited to the square footage calculated on that side only. In no case shall the square footage permitted for the building wall located along the front lot line and the square footage permitted for the building wall located along the corner side lot line be combined to create a larger sign on a wall other than that permitted on each individual wall.
  - c. In a multi-tenant structure, each tenant shall be permitted a wall sign of one (1) square foot per lineal foot of business frontage, with a minimum of twenty-five (25) square feet permitted for a wall sign for each tenant. In no case, shall the total amount of wall signs on the structure exceed one (1) square foot per lineal foot of business frontage or the sum total of twenty-five (25) square feet per tenant, whichever is greater. If a multi-tenant structure is located on a corner lot, the maximum size of the wall sign located on the wall along the corner lot line shall be limited to one (1) square foot per lineal foot of zoning lot frontage as measured along the front lot line, with a minimum of twenty-five (25) square feet per tenant permitted.

2. If there is a secondary entrance, an additional wall sign is permitted but shall be limited to no more than sixteen (16) square feet and shall only indicate the name of the business and the words “entrance,” “enter” or similar term.
3. Wall signs must be safely and securely attached to the building wall. Wall signs must be affixed flat against the building wall and must not project more than twelve (12) inches from the building wall. No aesthetic sign elements may be affixed or painted directly on a building’s exterior façade. All signs must be mounted in such a way that they may be removed with minimal impact on the building’s exterior wall.
4. No wall sign affixed to a building, including sign support structure, may project beyond the ends or top of the wall to which it is attached. On existing buildings, a parapet wall must not be constructed for the sole purpose of increasing the allowable height of a wall sign. For new buildings, when a sign is to be mounted on a parapet wall, that parapet wall must be consistent with the architectural design of the building, including building materials. Wall signs may not be attached to un-reinforced masonry parapets. Wall signs shall not cover windows, doors or architectural features.
5. Wall signs should be located on the sign frieze or the sign band of the building immediately above the first-floor window and below the second-floor window sills in the case of a two-story building. No wall sign shall be permitted to rise above the second story sill line. On one-story buildings, the top of the sign shall be no more than five (5) feet above the top of the main display window on the first floor.
6. Gooseneck reflectors are permitted on all wall signs provided the reflectors must concentrate the illumination upon the area of the sign face only. Internally illuminated signs shall be constructed with an opaque background with only letters, logos and/or details as translucent features. A white or light-colored background is discouraged.
7. Within a multi-tenant commercial development, all wall signs must be located at a generally uniform height on the building wall.
8. Time and temperature devices are permitted as part of wall signs. Such devices are included in all calculations of sign area.
9. Ghost signs are considered wall signs. Existing ghost signs are exempt from these requirements and are considered conforming. No new wall signs may be painted on buildings or structures.

**E. Awnings and Canopies:**

Awnings and canopies that are considered an architectural feature of a building and are not used for identifying the premises or the goods and/or services sold are not considered a sign. Awnings and canopies used as signs are considered to be wall signs subject to all such regulations and are further subject to the following regulations:

1. Awnings and canopies are permitted in any sign overlay district for multi-family residential and non-residential uses.
2. All awnings or canopies must maintain a minimum seven (7) foot clearance above grade at all points along the awning. Awnings and supports for canopies must not extend beyond a point two (2) feet from the curb line.
3. Printing on any individual awning or canopy is limited to thirty percent (30%) of the surface of any side of an awning or canopy.
4. An awning and canopy sign may be maintained in combination with a wall sign at a



particular premises subject to the following requirements:

- a. The awning and canopy sign shall only have printing on its valence; and
  - b. The awning and canopy sign shall not contain the name of the establishment located at the premises or any other business.
5. Awnings and canopies shall be constructed out of canvas or canvas-like material treated for fire resistance. Back-lit and metal awnings and canopies are prohibited.
  6. Awnings and canopies must be securely attached to and supported by a building. All frames and supports must be made of metal or similar material. Frames and supports may not be made of wood or plastics.
  7. Under-awning and under-canopy signs are permitted subject to the following:
    - a. Under-awning and under-canopy signs must be attached to the underside of an awning or canopy. Under-awning and under-canopy signs must not project beyond the awning.
    - b. Under-awning and under-canopy signs must maintain a minimum eight (8) foot clearance above the grade directly below the sign.
    - c. Maximum of one (1) under-awning and under-canopy signs per frontage per tenant.
    - d. Under-awning and under-canopy signs may not exceed two (2) square feet.
    - e. Under-awning and under-canopy signs are to be securely fixed with metal supports.
  8. All awnings or canopies shall comply with the following design standards:
    - a. Awnings and canopies shall be compatible in material and construction to the style and character of the building. The color of the awning or canopy shall be compatible with the overall color scheme of the façade.
    - b. When feasible, awnings and canopies shall be generally aligned with others nearby in order to maintain a sense of visual continuity.
    - c. Awnings and canopies shall fit the façade of the building and positioned so that distinctive architectural features remain visible.



*Examples of awnings that meet the standards of 7.7.15.E.8*

**7-7-16 : ELECTRONIC SIGN CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN STANDARDS:**

Electronic display screens are permitted in the Downtown and Neighborhood Commercial Sign Overlay Districts only. Electronic message signs are prohibited. Electronic display screens must comply with the following:

1. Electronic display screens are limited to six (6) square feet.
2. Electronic display screens must be mounted such that the highest portion of the sign is no higher than seven (7) feet above grade and shall not cover prominent architectural features. Electronic display screens that are mounted on, in front of, or inside transparent window areas shall be included in the calculation of window sign area.
3. Electronic display screens are permitted as wall or window signs only.
  - a. When an electronic display screen is used as a window sign, the electronic display screen shall be included in the twenty-five percent (25%) window sign area maximum for permanent window signs.
  - b. When an electronic display screen is used as a wall sign, the electronic display screen shall be included in the maximum permitted amount of wall sign area.
4. Only one (1) electronic display screen is permitted per zoning lot.
5. No electronic display screen shall display messages or images of off-premises advertising.
6. Each message or image displayed on an electronic display screen must be static or depicted for a minimum of eight (8) seconds. Animation, streaming video and images which move or give the appearance of movement are prohibited. No text message may blink, flash or mimic strobe-lighting effects.
7. No illumination from any electronic display screen may glare into any residential premises or

interfere with the safe movement of motor vehicles on public thoroughfares.

8. No electronic display screens may have audio speakers or any audio component.
9. Electronic display screens must comply with the light trespass requirements of Section 7.7.9.D.2.

**7-7-17 : SIGNS FOR HOSPITAL USE:**

Signs for a hospital use shall comply with the following regulations for the Corridor Commercial Sign Overlay District and this Code, except as follows:

1. Directional Signs (Permanent)
  - a. Such signs may designate hospital entrances, parking, walkways, emergency room locations, and other hospital-related facilities, as well as entrances or exits, by means of symbols or words. There is no limitation on the items of information.
  - b. One (1) directional sign is permitted for each driveway access from a public street. One (1) additional directional sign is permitted for each intersection of drives within a site, to identify traffic routing, entrances and services, such as drive-in lanes. Additional directional signs may be permitted subject to Zoning Administrator approval.
  - c. Directional signs shall be located entirely on the property to which they pertain. Directional signs shall not project beyond the property line.
  - d. Directional signs may have a maximum height of twelve (12) feet and a maximum surface area of fifty (50) square feet.
  - e. Directional signs may be illuminated.<sup>3</sup>

**7-7-18 : CLASSIC SIGNS:**

**A. Eligibility:**

1. Any person or the Village may apply for designation of an existing sign, as of the date of adoption of this Code, as a classic sign. Classic signs are exempt from area, setback, height, lighting, movement, flashing, placement, type, content, placement and construction materials requirements of this Code.
2. To qualify for designation as a classic sign, the sign must:
  - a. Be at least twenty-five (25) years old or a duplicate of an original sign where the combined age of the duplicate and original sign is at least twenty-five (25) years.
  - b. Possess unique physical design characteristics, such as configuration, message, color, texture, etc.
  - c. Be of extraordinary significance to the Village, regardless of the use identified by the sign.

**B. Application:**

1. An application for classic sign status must include plans for sign maintenance, renovation or possible reconstruction, acceptable to the Zoning Administrator.
2. Application for classic sign status must be made to the Village Planner, or his/her designee, who schedules a public hearing of the Community Design Commission and presents his/her recommendations to the Community Design Commission at a public hearing.

3. The Community Design Commission shall approve or deny the application.
4. The applicant may appeal a decision of the Community Design Commission to the Village Board within thirty (30) days of notification of the decision.

**C. Maintenance:**

The owner of a classic sign must ensure that the sign is not structurally dangerous, a fire hazard, an electrical shock hazard, or any other kind of hazard. Classic signs may be rebuilt if damaged.

**D. Designated Classic Signs:**

The following are deemed to be signs of special significance in the Village and are, therefore, exempted from the provisions of this Code:

1. Marshall Field marquee and clock
2. Lake Theater marquee and sign
3. Oak Park Federal clock/temperature sign (Forsyth Building)
4. Oak Park Trust clock/temperature sign (Oak Park Trust & Savings Bank Building)
5. Petersen's Ice Cream sign (1100 Chicago Avenue)

**7-7-19 : NONCONFORMING SIGNS:**

Nonconforming signs may be maintained subject to the following regulations:

- A. No nonconforming sign shall be expanded or altered to prolong the life of the sign. No nonconforming sign shall be changed to another nonconforming sign.
- B. The copy, message or graphic of a nonconforming sign may be changed. A nonstructural component of the sign on which the copy, message or graphic is displayed, such as a plastic or metal panel or insert, may be replaced to the extent necessary to accommodate this change.
- C. If the copy, message or graphic of a nonconforming sign cannot be changed without altering a structural component, then such change is not permitted. Structural components include any part of a sign attached directly to the ground or to a building or structure, any part of the supporting structure of a sign without which the sign fails to maintain its structural integrity, or support any part of a sign's electrical or lighting equipment.
- D. No nonconforming sign shall be relocated in whole or in part unless, when relocated, it conforms to all of the provisions of this Code.
- E. Signs which do not conform to the provisions of this Code but which lawfully existed and were maintained prior to the adoption of this amended Code shall be removed or made to conform within sixty (60) days after written notice by the Development Customer Services Department when:
  1. The use of the establishment changes and the exterior of the building or other site conditions are to be altered; or
  2. A sign is damaged by any cause resulting in replacement or repair cost equal to or greater than one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of its replacement value at the time the damage occurs; or
  3. The maximum cost to bring a sign into conformance with this article is five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or less, which shall include the removal of neon, wall, and window signs and the removal of neon lighting outlining buildings, doors and windows. If a property owner or agent claims that the cost to bring a sign into conformance with this article is

more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00), the property owner or agent shall provide a written cost estimate from a reputable sign business to the Village to be exempt from the requirements of this section; or

4. A new business is proposed to be located at the applicable property where the nonconforming sign is maintained and the new business owner or agent proposes to alter the sign at the location and the proposed alteration requires a sign permit pursuant to this article.