Signage Design Guidelines

Design Compatibility

- *Quality Signs and Creative Design:* Encourage the use of high quality, imaginative, and innovative signs. Such building signs should contribute positively to the general appearance of the commercial district.
- *Integration with Building Design:* Architectural features should not be obstructed by signs. The design of the sign should be integrated and compatible with the design of the building.
- *Proportion and Scale:* Size of the sign should be proportionate to the building and the area in which it is located. Code enforcement necessary to ensure sign guidelines with respect to size and scale are met.
- *Coordination of Signs on Multi-Tenant Buildings:* In case of multiple ground floor tenants in a storefront building along a sidewalk or a strip mall behind a parking lot, individual tenants' signs should share some common design elements such as size and placement on the façade to make them more legible to potential customers. In some cases, letter style, colors, and materials may vary to reinforce the individual identity of the tenant. In case of multiple tenants sharing a single entry, encourage the adoption of a single collective name and sign program to avoid creating an illegible mishmash of competing signs.

Sign Legibility

- *Succinct Message*: A sign with fewer words is typically easier to read, more effective, and looks more attractive. Evaluate whether words in the sign detract from the message, and if so, they probably should be deleted.
- *Symbols and Logos*: Use symbols and logos in place of words as visual images register more quickly than a written message. If the symbol or logo relates directly to the business or products sold, it will reinforce the business identity.
- *Letter Size:* The size of the letters should be appropriate for the intended audience. For example, signs for the pedestrian should be smaller than those for motorists or bus riders. The farther the sign's viewing distance, the larger the lettering needs to be, as shown in the table below:

Letter Size	easily Readable at
1 inch	10 feet
2 inches	30 feet
3 inches	50 feet
4 inches	70 feet
6 inches	100 feet

*If lettering is placed on a sign panel, as a general rule, lettering should not cover 75% of the panel area.

- *Letter Style and Capitalization:* Type styles and capitalization may vary from business to business to reflect the individuality of each business and to create interest. However, to enhance legibility, only a few lettering styles should be used on one sign. As a general rule, not more than two styles should be used on a small sign and three styles on a large sign. Avoid using intricate typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read and obfuscate the message. Variations in letter thickness and capitalization affect legibility and visual impact of a sign.
- *Letter Spacing:* Sign's legibility is reduced if letters or words are placed too close together or too far apart.

Sign Color

- *Contrasting Colors:* Substantial contrast between the foreground (sign's letters and symbols) and background will make the sign easier to read.
- *Number of Colors:* Color combinations should enhance design legibility. In general, large areas of many different colors decrease legibility while small accents of several colors can make a sign eye-catching and unique.
- *Complementary Colors:* The color of the sign should complement the building. A sign may reflect some or all colors used in the building façade.

Sign Materials and Construction

Individual Letters: Encourage the use of individual letters or symbols, including 3-dimensional letters with internal light source, neon or dimensional cut metal, or plastic letters. To facilitate changes, cut-out letters may be mounted on a raceway or may be individually pin-mounted.

- *Panel Sign Materials:* Appropriate materials for panel signs include:
  - o Wood - carved, sandblasted or etched and properly sealed, primed and painted or stained.
  - o Metal – formed, etched, cast and/or engraved and powder coated or otherwise protected.
  - o High density preformed foam or similar materials appropriate if designed to complement the building design and manufactured to be durable and of low maintenance.

  Discourage the use of rectangular sign cabinets.

- *Compatible Materials:* Materials used for the sign should be compatible with the design of the façade and contribute to the legibility of the sign. For instance, glossy finishes may cause glare and be difficult to read.
- *Durable Materials:* Encourage construction of signs with durable materials with low maintenance requirements. Paper and cloth signs (except for awnings) are not desirable as they deteriorate quickly.

Sign Illumination

- *Direct Light Source:* Spotlight is often the best means to focus attention on the sign and at the same time illuminate the façade. Lighting fixtures should be in scale with the sign and other building façade elements.
- *Internal Illumination:* Letters illuminated internally and individually, i.e. channel letters or back lit solid letters are preferred while plastic cabinet signs are strongly discouraged.

Sign Maintenance

- *Maintenance:* Exterior signs should be properly maintained and kept clean. Ensure good structural condition of all supports, braces, anchors, and maintenance of electrical components. Replace defective lighting components or damaged signs promptly. Faded painted surfaces and/or weathered signs should be repainted promptly.