

1 Proposed Downtown Sign Code Amendments

2 CAC Draft November 3, 2017

3 Springfield Municipal Code [http://www.springfield-](http://www.springfield-or.gov/dpw/ResourceCenter/PermitsApplications/Building/SignCode.pdf)
4 [or.gov/dpw/ResourceCenter/PermitsApplications/Building/SignCode.pdf](http://www.springfield-or.gov/dpw/ResourceCenter/PermitsApplications/Building/SignCode.pdf)

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6 **8.200 Signs**

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8 *Commentary: The purpose of the proposed amendments to the Downtown sign code is to support*
9 *commercial success of downtown by ensuring a pleasant and safe experience for business patrons,*
10 *visitors, and residents. The Council recognizes that the Downtown Mixed-Use Plan District is a district*
11 *with unique qualities and characteristics, which should be reinforced by design standards that are*
12 *specific and appropriate to the district. Adoption of the proposed amendments would apply new*
13 *Downtown Design standards to the installation of new signage within the Downtown Mixed-Use Plan*
14 *District.*

15
16 *Commentary: The proposed amendments add a definition for “Blade Sign” because this type of sign has*
17 *become popular in Springfield and other walkable downtowns. Blade signs have a pedestrian-oriented*
18 *look, feel and function due to their scale, lettering font size, materials and mounting brackets —often*
19 *contributing distinctive artistic elements to the district streetscape. Blade signs are encouraged, but not*
20 *required. Blade signs are currently addressed in the code within the definition of “Wall Sign.”*
21 *Addressing them in the Definitions section is intended to more clearly communicate that Springfield*
22 *permits this sign type.*

23
24 **8.202 Definitions.** The meaning of specific terms pertaining to the regulation of signs are:

25 ...

26
27 **Blade Sign.** A double-faced wall sign or projecting sign less than one (1) inch in thickness with
28 a sign face area less than nine (9) square feet that is attached to the building face at a 90 degree
29 angle and may or may not be mounted hung from an ornamental metal bracket sign structure.
30 Blade signs are designed to be viewed by pedestrians approaching the store front from both
31 directions along the street and sidewalk.

32 ...

33
34 *Commentary: The purpose of Downtown Design Standards for signs is to encourage the effective use of*
35 *signs as a means of communication and advertising in a manner that reduces the negative effects of*
36 *signs on safety and aesthetics.*

37 **8.250 Downtown Sign District.**

38 The Downtown Sign District is shown on Map No.1. Each business in this district shall be limited to
39 three (3) signs not counting required pedestrian-oriented signs.

40 *Commentary: The proposed amendments require Downtown businesses requesting sign permits to*
41 *provide at least one sign that is designed to be pedestrian-oriented. The proposed Code provision*

42 provides several options to address the requirement. As an incentive, pedestrian-oriented blade signs
43 are not counted toward the overall number of allowed signs per business.

44
45 (1) Required Pedestrian-oriented Signs. The building official shall not issue a permit for any new
46 signs unless a business provides at least one pedestrian-oriented sign that meets one of the following
47 criteria:

48 (a) A blade sign with lettering size no more than twelve (12) inches tall.

49 (b) A sign no larger than less than nine (9) square feet placed on an entry door, storefront
50 window, wall, or building column visible from the sidewalk having lettering size no more
51 than eighteen (18) inches tall and installed within the area an area between four and six feet
52 high above the grade of the abutting sidewalk. A sign placed on entry door glass or on a
53 storefront window must not obstruct the view into the business from the abutting sidewalk.

54
55 (2) Wall Signs. Each business shall be allowed the following:

56 (a) First Story Businesses. First story businesses facing a public street shall be permitted
57 signage of three (3) square feet per lineal foot of building wall.

58 (b) Second Story Businesses and Above. Second story businesses facing a public street shall
59 be permitted signage of 1 ½ square feet per lineal foot of building wall.
60

61 *Commentary: The proposed amendments restrict placement and size of large highway-type pole or*
62 *monument signs to support a transition to a pedestrian-oriented Downtown and to reduce sign clutter as*
63 *called for in the Downtown Refinement Plan. Existing code allows pole signs to be twenty (20) feet tall.*
64 *The Development Code requires buildings to be built up to the sidewalk, so restricting placement of signs*
65 *within the front setback is consistent with the desired development pattern. On “transitioning” arterial*
66 *streets in Downtown (South A and Pioneer Parkway) where walkable storefronts are not currently the*
67 *norm, the proposed amendments would continue to allow larger signs.*
68

69 (3) Freestanding, Projecting, or Roof Signs. Each building shall be permitted one (1) free standing
70 sign, projecting sign or roof sign subject to the following standards:

71 (a) Roof signs and projecting signs shall be limited to a maximum area of eighty (80) square
72 feet for one face and one hundred and sixty (160) square feet for two or more faces.

73 (b) Subject to the exceptions set forth below, freestanding signs must not exceed twenty-four
74 (24) square feet for one sign face and forty-eight (48) square feet for two or more sign faces;
75 freestanding signs mounted on a post or pole must be not more than twelve (12) feet in height
76 above grade with at least eight (8) feet clearance from grade to the bottom of the sign; and
77 freestanding monument signs must not be taller than five (5) feet in height above grade.

78 (i) Freestanding signs along South A and Pioneer Parkway West and Pioneer
79 Parkway East must not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet for one sign face and sixty-
80 four (64) square feet for two or more sign faces.

81 (ii) Freestanding signs along Main Street between Mill and 8th Street are not
82 permitted.

83 *Commentary: The [proposed] sign code permits window signs in commercial and mixed-use zones as long*
84 *as they do not exceed 20% of the gross glass area. Signs within the 20% threshold do not require a sign*

85 *permit. The proposed language below lowers the threshold to 10% Downtown, and clarifies that any*
86 *signs exceeding the threshold must be permitted as wall signs.*

87
88 (4) Window Signs. Notwithstanding the window sign exception in Section 8.234(6) of this code,
89 window signs not exceeding 10% of the gross glass area of a business are permitted without
90 obtaining a sign permit. Window signs that exceed 10% of the gross glass area are wall signs subject
91 to the limits set forth in Section 8.250(2).

92
93 *Commentary: The existing code 8.202 definition of Projecting Sign (applicable City-wide) allows a*
94 *projecting sign to extend within two (2) feet of the curb line. Code defines "Curb Line" as "The line at the*
95 *face of the curb nearest to the street or roadway." Where constructed as such, projecting signs can*
96 *create visual obstruction over the sidewalk, block illumination from adjacent street lights, and interfere*
97 *with maintenance of street trees within the Downtown sidewalk zone. After examining this issue, the*
98 *Committee recommends limiting the allowed encroachment to 4 feet from building wall.*

99
100 (5) Encroachment and Clearance. The minimum clearance for all signs encroaching in the public
101 right of way shall be eight (8) feet measured from grade to the bottom of the sign. The maximum
102 encroachment into the public right of way shall be four (4) feet from the building wall, as measured
103 in a perpendicular line between the building wall and the outermost edge of the sign or sign structure,
104 provided that no sign shall encroach within two (2) feet of any curb or driveway line.

105
106 (6) Illumination From Signs on Non Residential Property. External illumination shall be shielded so
107 that the light source elements are not directly visible from property in a residential zone which is
108 adjacent to or across a street from the property in the non-residential zone.

109 *Commentary: Preponderance of abandoned signs and sign structures and non-conforming signs*
110 *contributes to the appearance and perception of blight condition in downtowns, impeding the*
111 *commercial vitality of Springfield's Downtown District as a whole. The Committee recommends*
112 *incremental removal of non-conforming signs and structures to reduce visual clutter, improve safety and*
113 *aesthetics in support of Downtown's revitalization. Establishing a new effective date for the new design*
114 *standards for signs within the Downtown Sign District will provide clarity to property owners and*
115 *businesses regarding the extent to which previously permitted signs are allowed to remain.*

116 (7) Non-Conforming Signs. A non-conforming sign within the Downtown Mixed-Use Plan District
117 shall be defined as a legal sign existing on the effective date of January 1, 2018, but which does not
118 fully comply with the current sign regulations. Notwithstanding Section 8.323 of this Code, when a
119 business submits an application for a new sign and the business has existing non-conforming signs,
120 no permit will issued for the new sign(s) unless the existing non-conforming signs are removed or
121 altered subject to the standards of this Code, except that the Development and Public Works Director
122 may allow continuance of a non-conforming signs that contribute to the character of the Downtown
123 Sign District and that meet the safety requirements of this Code.