SIGNAGE
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Intent
- To establish specific standards for Downtown business identification.
- To encourage creative and innovative approaches to regulating signs consistent with the principles and general intent of the DUDSG.

Principles
- To encourage excellence in signage, both as a communication tool and as an art form.
- To enhance the economic value of the built environment by avoiding visual clutter, which is potentially harmful to property values and business opportunities.
- To allow and encourage creative and unique sign designs while preventing cluttered and unattractive streetscapes.
- To ensure signs reinforce the existing and envisioned character and are complementary to the architectural design of Downtown.

Administration
Staff may authorize installation of a sign that exceeds the applicable size or height restriction by up to 20 percent of the maximum size or height prescribed by this chapter after determining that:
- The sign owner or user has demonstrated the existence of practical difficulties in complying with the standards.
- A unique circumstance exists that make compliance with the requirements of this chapter impractical.

Nonconforming Signs
An existing nonconforming sign may be restored to its original condition. A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) should be obtained prior to the approval of any necessary permits. However, if the sign is removed or the shape/design is changed, the new sign must conform to the current standards.

Businesses are encouraged to create unique and interesting signs that distinguish downtown establishments.

Example of signage clutter.
SIGNAGE

Modifications for Exceptional Design
Signage that does not fit the specific standards and guidelines of this section may be considered by the DDRB. In general, effectively designed signs should respond to the site, landscape, and architectural design context within which they are located. Signs should be compatible in scale, proportion, and design with the building's façade and its surroundings, and made of quality, durable material. These signs should seek to become a piece of art or an architectural feature. Exceptional design modifications shall be reviewed based on aforementioned criteria, sign standard intent, and the guiding principles of the DUDSG (see page 67 for creative signs).

Comprehensive Building Signage Plan Standards
A comprehensive building signage plan regulates signage for multiple businesses or tenants within one building or development. Commercial signs on a large project with an uniform façade and more than one storefront, should relate to each other in terms of height, proportion, color, and background value. Maintaining uniformity among these characteristics reinforces the building's façade composition while still communicating business identity.

A comprehensive sign plan is mandatory for all new developments and sign modifications on existing buildings.

- The comprehensive building signage plan shall establish an allowable area of signage for existing and future tenants with regard to all allowed sign types.
- The comprehensive building signage plan shall indicate existing nonconforming signs, and the number and location of on-premises signage to be allocated to each tenant under the new plan.

The following signs are prohibited:
- Off-premise signs
- Pole signs
- Freeway signs
- Supergraphic signs advertising off-premise signage are prohibited.

The following signs are not allowed:
- Rooftop signs (signs placed above the roofline of a building)
- Standard box cabinet wall signs.
- Signs located at the crown of buildings greater than 120 feet in height.
- Animated signs

Standard box cabinet wall signs are not allowed.
Rooftop signs are not allowed.
Pole signs and Freeway signs are prohibited.
SIGNAGE—GENERAL SIGN STANDARDS

Location and Alignment Standards

- Signs shall be positioned to emphasize or accent building elements such as storefront openings or entrances.

- Signs shall not be installed in locations that damage or obstruct important architectural features.

- Where possible and appropriate, signs shall be aligned with those on neighboring buildings to promote visual order on the block, to avoid visual clutter, and to enhance legibility.

- Signage for ground floor occupants shall be located below second floor window sills with the exception of blade signs.

- Signage for occupants located on the second floor and above shall be located on a tenant directory, monument sign or below second floor window sills.

Generally, signs should align to promote visual order. Contrast between the color of the background and the letters or symbols makes the sign easier to read.

This storefront has a large amount of visual clutter. The signage obstructs the interior view.

Repetitious signage on the same building frontage should be avoided.

A building’s architecture often provides appropriate locations for signs. This sign is appropriately located and architecturally compatible.
SIGNAGE—GENERAL SIGN STANDARDS

Dimensions and Scale Standards
- Signs shall be consistent with the human scale of downtown buildings and blocks. Small scale signs are appropriate to smaller scale buildings and pedestrian traffic, while larger scaled signs are typically appropriate to vehicular traffic. Well designed storefronts include pedestrian oriented signage and window displays. Storefronts consider generally the urban environment where the means of travel is traditionally by foot or slow moving vehicles.

- Signage shall be compatible to scale of the building, adjacent buildings, the streetscape and adjacent signage.

Material Standards
- Signs shall relate in material with the building façade and streetscape.

- All permanent signs shall be constructed of quality, durable materials.

Graphic Standard
- Sign graphics shall be simple. Symbols and logos on signs are quickly read and easily remembered. Lettering shall be in proportion to the size of the sign.

Lighting Standards
- Lighting sources should be external, shielded, and directed only at the sign. Internal illumination is acceptable when the letters themselves, not the background, are lit.

- All electronic changeable copy signs shall be reviewed by the DDRB.

- Animated signs are not allowed.
SIGNAGE—GENERAL SIGN STANDARDS

Building Façade Measurement Standard
Use the diagram below to measure building facade.

Sign Area Measurement Standards
- Sign area for all signs shall be measured by means of the area of one rectangular or circular shape that encloses all sign elements except the support structure.
- For signs consisting of individual letters and/or graphics mounted on a building wall or window, the sign area shall be measured by means of the area of one rectangular or circular shape that encloses all of the letters and graphics that constitute the sign.
**SIGNAGE—ALLOCATION OF SIGN AREA**

**Allocation Of Sign Area Standards**

The maximum sign area is determined by the charts below. The maximum allowed sign area may be used with any combination and number of signs, unless otherwise noted. All signs shall meet the General Sign Standards (pp. 44-46) and the individual sign type standards and guidelines.

The height of a building shall be measured from grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Floor Uses</th>
<th>Total Allowable Sign Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall signs</td>
<td>1.25 square feet per linear foot of storefront, with a maximum of 25 square feet per storefront. For storefronts exceeding 50 linear feet, the maximum allowed square footage shall be 35 square feet. Corner lots and storefronts may be calculated on both street facing façades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blade signs/ projecting signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awning signs/ umbrella signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canopy signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquee signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaque signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shingle sign</td>
<td>12 square feet per storefront.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window signs and decals</td>
<td>Count toward total allowable sign area if the sign(s) exceed 10% of window space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-frame sign</td>
<td>One (1) sign per storefront.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Floor and Above Uses</th>
<th>Total Allowable Sign Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall signs</td>
<td>100 square feet with no single sign to exceed 25 square feet. Must be located within five (5) feet of an entrance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blade signs/ projecting signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awning signs/ umbrella signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canopy Signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquee signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaque signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument signs</td>
<td>Allocated as per sign type standards and guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant directory signs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SIGNAGE—WALL SIGNS

Wall Sign Standards
Wall signs are attached to and completely supported by exterior walls. A wall sign should be placed above ground floor windows on a one story structure or between windows. One wall sign for each storefront or building façade that fronts a public street or alley is usually sufficient.

- **Maximum width:** 66 percent of the linear width of the business, not to exceed the maximum allowable square footage.

- **Letter height:** Lettering shall be in proportion to the size of the sign and the width of the storefront. Wider storefronts could have taller letters. As a general rule, the maximum height of a capital letter should be 3/4 the height of the sign background.

- Exposed raceways are not allowed and require a waiver from the DDRB.

- Signs on side or rear building elevations for a ground floor business are permitted, provided that the elevation contains a public entrance.

Wall signs should be designed to be compatible with the storefront in scale, proportions, and color. Internal illumination is appropriate, provided that each individual letter is illuminated.

Exposed raceways are not allowed and require a waiver from the DDRB.
Projecting and Blade Sign Standards

Projecting signs are two sided signs attached to the face of a building. Blade signs are two sided signs that are generally vertical in orientation and span multiple floors. Both signs project perpendicular to the storefront or building.

- **Minimum vertical clearance:** 11 feet
- **Projecting sign maximum projection width:** 4 feet
- **Projecting sign maximum height:** 6 feet
- **Blade sign maximum projection width:** 3 feet
- **Blade sign maximum height:** 8 feet

No more than one projecting sign is allowed per tenant space frontage at the ground level of a building.

A projecting sign or blade sign shall be located a minimum of 25 feet from any other projecting sign or blade sign. When building or storefront width prohibits adherence to this standard, flexibility shall be permitted through a minor modification to be reviewed by staff.

A projecting sign may be erected on a building corner when the building corner adjoins the intersection of two streets. Allocation of sign area from both streets may be used. However, in no case shall the sign exceed the maximum dimensional standards for projecting or blade signs.

A projecting and blade sign shall be located below the window sills of the third story.

The top of a projecting or blade sign shall not extend above the building eave or top of parapet.

Projecting and blade signs should reflect the character of each building and business. The size and shape of a projecting and blade signs should respect the scale of the structure.
AWNING AND CANOPY SIGNS

Awning Sign Standards
Awning and canopy signs are painted on or attached to an awning above a business door or window. Awning signs may be allowed on the shed portion of the awning, but are preferred on the valence flap. The flap height should be large enough for letters and symbols to be read easily.

- Minimum valence height: 8 inches
- Minimum vertical clearance from sidewalk: 11 feet
- Maximum letter height is limited to 75 percent of the height of the valence flap/shed area
- Material shall be a matte finish canvas
- Colors shall be solid or striped
- Awning shape shall relate to the window or door opening
- Awning shall be externally illuminated

Awning Sign Guidelines
- Barrel shaped awnings should be used to complement arched windows
- Rectangular awnings should be used on rectangular windows

Canopy Sign Standards
Canopy signs typically are attached above or below the face of a canopy.

- Maximum: one (1) sign per canopy
- A canopy sign shall not extend beyond the length or width, but can extend above or below the face of the canopy.
Shingle Sign Standards

Shingle signs are smaller projecting signs that are typically located near the entrance of a storefront. They project outward at a 90 degree angle and hang from brackets. Shingle signs can include logos, symbols, or lettering. A shingle sign is generally intended to be read by pedestrians and by motorists in slow moving vehicles.

- Minimum vertical clearance: 8 feet
- Maximum projection: 48 inches
- Maximum area per sign face: 6 square feet per sign face
- Maximum total area: 12 square feet
- Shingle signs shall be located within eight (8) feet of an active pedestrian entrance. To minimize visual clutter, shingle signs should not be located within close proximity to other hanging signs or projecting signs.

Symbols and logos on signs, identifying the business, add interest to the street, are quickly read, and are often remembered more easily than words.
Window Sign and Decal Standards

Window signs are painted on or attached to the inside of a window facing the street. This type of signage can contain text, graphic logos, and other images.

- **Maximum area**: 25 percent of the total transparent glass area of windows parallel to the street, excluding the area of all glass doors.

- **Location**: shall be limited to ground floor window facing the primary street frontage and adjoining parking lots.

- **Materials**: shall be of high quality, such as vinyl decals, paint, gold-leaf, or neon.

- **Visibility**: Window signs shall not completely obscure visibility into or out of the window. Exceptions may be made for signs that screen utility, mechanical office and kitchen equipment and vacant spaces.

- **Limitation**: A maximum of one window sign is permitted per window pane or framed window area.

- **Temporary signs**: Temporary window signs are allowed to identify special events and sales, provided they are removed immediately following the event.

- **Handwritten signs**: Handwritten, paper, cardboard, and plastic signs are not allowed.

- **Neon signs**: Neon signs are permitted provided that all electrical supply cords, conduit, and electrical transformers are hidden from view through the window.

Window signs can express business image through graphic logos or colorful images. The sign copy of window signs should be in proportion to the glass surface. Well designed window graphics attract attention while still allowing pedestrians to view store interiors.
A-Frame Sign Standards

Portable A-frame signs are signs and advertising devices that rest on the ground and are not designed to be permanently attached to a building or permanently anchored to the ground. A-frame signs in Downtown are designed to attract pedestrians, not passing motorists.

- Each business is allowed to have one (1) A-frame sign.
- A-frame signs shall not encroach into required off-street parking areas, public roadways, or alleys, and may not be arranged so as to create site distance conflicts or other traffic hazards.
- A-frame signs can only be utilized only during regular business hours and should be removed during non-business hours.
- A-frame signs are allowed on private property or within public rights-of-ways sign shall not impede pedestrian, ADA, or vehicular access.
- A minimum access width of seven (7) feet should be maintained along all sidewalks and building entrances accessible to the public.

Portable signs should be visually interesting.

A-frame signs should not interfere with public right of way or ADA access. This sign is placed too close to the ADA sidewalk ramp, making it difficult to cross the street.
Plaque Signs Standards
Plaque signs are attached to the surface adjacent to building entries and are smaller versions of wall signs.

- Location are limited to wall surfaces adjacent to tenant entry.
- Maximum projection: 2 inches
- Maximum height: 2 feet
- Maximum width: 2 feet

Plaque signs should include unique designs or other interesting graphics.
SIGNAGE—MARQUEE SIGNS

Marquee Sign Standards
Marquee signs are projecting signs attached to the perimeter or border of a permanently roofed building, and are constructed as a part of the building. Marquee signs are usually installed on theaters, cinemas, and performing art facilities.

- Maximum area for facility name: 40% of total sign area
- Maximum area for the changeable copy: 80% of total sign area
- Sign copy is limited to the facility name and changeable copy related to current and future attractions.
SIGNAGE—CHANGEABLE COPY SIGNS

Changeable Copy Sign Standards
Changeable copy signs are signs where letters, symbols, or numerals are not permanently affixed to the structure, framing, or background. This allows the message to change over time. Examples include a bulletin board, electronic message board, or projected image sign. Electronic changeable copy signs are appropriate for the following uses: theaters, hotels, public transit, and gas station pricing signs.

- All changeable copy signs shall be reviewed by the DDRB.
- Maximum of 25% of the sign face may be devoted to changeable copy.
- Changeable copy signs shall not be used to display commercial messages relating to products or services that are not offered on premise.
- Window electronic display sign locations shall not contribute to light pollution for any adjacent residential developments.
- On detached signs, electronic changeable copy shall be limited to monument signs.
- The message shall not change at a rate faster than one message every 20 seconds. The interval between messages shall be a minimum of one second.
- Changeable copy signs shall not contain animation, rolling or running letters or message, flashing lights, or displays.
- All sound is prohibited.

NOTE:
Using the criteria above, all electronic changeable copy signs shall receive a recommendation from the DDRB prior to receiving a special exception from the City of Fort Worth Board of Adjustment:

Brightly lit changeable copy signs add to the energy and vibrancy of the area.
SIGNAGE—MONUMENT SIGNS

Monument Sign Standards
Monument signs are freestanding and located adjacent to sidewalks. Such signs are typically used for buildings that are separated from adjacent streets by substantial setbacks.

- **Maximum total area**: 60 square feet per sign face
- **Maximum height**: 8 feet including base.
- Locations are limited to landscaped areas, with a minimum setback from the public right-of-way of five (5) feet.
- Backgrounds shall be opaque with a non-reflective material.
- A monument sign shall be set onto a base or frame, presenting a solid, attractive, and well-proportioned appearance that compliments the building design and materials.
- External lighting fixtures shall be designed to complement the appearance of the sign or internal lighting that only illuminates text and logos.
- A sign erected on the top of a retaining wall is considered a monument sign. The height of the wall shall be included in the overall height calculation. In this case, the five (5) foot minimum setback is not required.
- A sign affixed to the face of a retaining wall or seat wall that is an integral part of a plaza or streetscape design may utilize the sign area allocated to wall signs. In this case, the five (5) foot minimum setback is not required.
SIGNAGE—TENANT DIRECTORY SIGNS

Tenant Directory Sign Standards

Tenant directory signs are used to identify businesses in multi-tenant buildings that do not have direct frontage on a public street. The design of the sign should complement the building’s design.

- **Maximum sign height:** 8 feet including the sign base.
- **Maximum letter height:** Building/development name or logo: 8 inches  
  All others: 4 inches

- Tenant directory signs shall:
  - Conform to monument sign standards.
  - Orient to the pedestrian realm.
  - Mount flat against a solid wall within or near a main entrance, or incorporated into a freestanding sign located on the property on which the tenants are located.
  - If lit, be externally lit to complement the appearance of the sign, or provided internal lighting that only illuminates text and logos.

Tenant directory signs could be mounted flat against a solid wall within or near a main entrance, or incorporated into a freestanding sign.
SIGNAGE—BUILDING IDENTIFICATION

Building Identification Sign Standards

Building identification signs are words, graphics, or logos used to identify the building. Wall signs below the second story window sills and blade signs below the third floor windows sills are appropriate locations for building identification signage.

Building identification signs shall be:

- Located adjacent to the primary entrance of the building.
- Limited to two (2) signs per building, with no more than one sign per façade signs must have identical messages.
- Applicable to sign type standards found within the DUDSG.
- Limited to 25 square feet per sign.
- Compatible with existing architecture.

Building identification signage should be located adjacent to the primary entrance of the building. Wall signs below the second story window sills and blade signs below the third floor windows sills are appropriate location for building identification signage.
SIGNAGE—CROWN OF BUILDING SIGNAGE

Crown of Building Sign Standards

With downtown revitalization, an architectural personality has emerged, distinguishing it from other cities. The absence of commercial logos and messages on the majority of taller buildings leaves a clean, sophisticated skyline. Preventing further intrusion of commercial messages on the skyline is a desire of the Downtown community. To avoid visual clutter, signs shall not be allowed to dominate the skyline.

A crown of building sign is a sign attached flat to or mounted away from the building façade. A crown of building sign may be parallel to the building façade horizontally or vertically, and shall be located on the upper band of a building.

- Crown of building signs located on buildings at or greater than 120 feet in height are not allowed.
- Crown of building signs located on buildings less than 120 feet in height are allowed, provided the signs meet the requirements below. The DDRB may grant a waiver for a sign at or greater than 120 feet. All Crown of Building signs shall meet all of the requirements below:
  - A crown of building sign must be located between the top of the parapet or high point of the building, exclusive of penthouse and mechanical screening structures, and the horizontal line not more than 15 feet below the top of the parapet or high point of the building on the side of the building to which the sign is affixed.
  - No portion of a crown of building sign shall extend above the roof line or above a parapet wall of a building with a flat roof.
  - More than two (2) signs are prohibited.
  - Signs shall have identical messages.
  - No more than one (1) crown of building sign per façade is allowed.
  - A maximum of one (1) horizontal or vertical line of letters or symbols.
  - Prohibited signs – raceways, cabinet, and animated.
  - Lighting is limited to internally illuminated channel letters and/or logo and/or "halo-lit" channel letters and/or logo.
  - Signs shall be compatible with existing architecture and shall be appropriately scaled and sized for their location. Signs shall not conceal, destroy, or distract from character defining features.
  - Area (max): Square footage shall be determined by the height of the building.
    - 18' to 100': 100 square feet
    - 101' - 200': 200 square feet
    - 201' and taller: 300 square feet
  - Height (max):
    - 18' to 100': 4 feet
    - 101' - 200': 6 feet
    - 201' and taller: 8 feet
  - Width (max percentage of façade length): 66%
Creative Sign Standards

Creative signs bring fun and vitality to Downtown streets and are encouraged. In general, uniquely designed signage shall respond to the site, landscape, and architectural design context where they are located. Signs shall seek to become a piece of art or an architectural feature. Creative signs shall be reviewed based on this criteria, sign intent, and the guiding principles of the DUDSG.

Exciting, interesting, and unusual signs can contribute to Downtown's vitality.

The specifications shown in the graphic above serve as the basic standards for downtown parking lot signs. This is considered a creative sign and must receive approval from the DDRB.
Mural Standards
Murals painted on a wall surface may be permitted upon approval by the DDRB to ensure:

- The artwork complements the design of the building in color, shape, and location on the building.
- Material is durable and resistant to graffiti and weather.

If the mural contains advertising, logos, or commercial messages, it qualifies as a sign and must be reviewed by the DDRB.

Professionally executed murals can add to the vibrancy of a downtown and last for years.

Temporary Sign Standards
Temporary signs include grand opening banners, community interest signs on private property, construction signs, and real estate signs. Temporary signs are allowed for a limited amount of time, as described below.

- Temporary signs are permitted for a maximum of 30 days or upon the conclusion of the event, whichever occurs first. Extensions may be granted if the applicant proves the necessity for additional time.
- Illumination of temporary signs is prohibited.
- Signs shall not extend beyond the subject property nor interfere with traffic safety or visibility.
- The sign area shall not exceed 25 square feet and shall conform to all applicable sign type standards.
- For buildings with a setback of 20 feet or more, a free-standing sign no larger than 16 square feet per face may be considered.
- Material: Sturdy and not subject to fading or damage from weather. The use of paper or cloth is not permitted unless located within a glass or plastic enclosure.

Example of a temporary banner.