

## 10. Signs

### a. Intent

- 1) To establish specific standards for Near Southside business identification.
- 2) To encourage creative and innovative approaches to regulating signs consistent with the principles and general intent of the Near Southside Development Standards.

### b. Principles

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

**c. 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 section after determining that:

- 1) The applicant or user has demonstrated the existence of practical difficulties in complying with the standards.
- 2) A unique circumstance exists that make compliance with the requirements of this section impractical.

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



*Examples of our of scale signs.*



*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.*

## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

e. Modifications for Exceptional Design — Signage that does not fit the specific standards and guidelines of this section may be considered by the UDC. 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 Near Southside Development Standards and Guidelines (see page 70 for creative signs).

f. 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 a 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.

1. The comprehensive building signage plan shall establish an allowable area of signage for existing and future tenants with regard to all allowed sign types.
2. 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.

#### g. General Sign Standards—

1. Signs shall be positioned to emphasize or accent building elements such as storefront openings or entrances.
2. Signs shall not be installed in locations that damage or obstruct important architectural features.
3. 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.
4. Signs shall be consistent with the human scale of Near Southside 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.
5. Signs shall relate in material with the building façade and streetscape.
6. All permanent signs shall be constructed of quality, durable materials as specified in the Sign Code (Chapter 29 of the City Code).
7. 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.
8. Lighting sources shall be external, shielded, and directed only at the sign. Internal illumination is acceptable when the letters themselves, not the background, are lit.
9. All electronic changeable copy signs shall be reviewed by the UDC and requires a special exception from the Board of Adjustment.

## 10. Signs (cont.)



*Well designed storefronts include pedestrian oriented signage, window displays, and the use of internally illuminated channel letters.*



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

**h. Allocation Of Sign Area**— The following size limits apply to buildings occupied by a single tenant and to individual tenant spaces in buildings with multiple tenants. One or more attached signs may be erected on each facade of the occupied space. The signs may have a total area of 10% of the area of the facade to which the signs are attached, with a maximum aggregate area of 500 square feet per facade. Doors and windows shall be included in the calculation of the facade area. The facade area shall be calculated by multiplying the width times the height, with a maximum calculated height of 15 feet. For structures exceeding 15 feet in height, allowable sign square footage shall be calculated as 1.5 square feet per linear foot of building facade. A maximum of 1,340 square feet of attached on-premise signage shall be allowed, regardless of the number of facades or buildings associated with a single business or tenant.

## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

#### i. Sign Types:

#### 1. The following signs types are prohibited:

- Off-premise signs
- Pole signs
- Animated signs

#### 2. The following signs types are not allowed:

- Freeway signs along Interstate 30 and its associated frontage roads.
- Wall signs made of flat vinyl or metal pans and have a projecting depth of less than six (6) inches
- Standard box cabinet signs
- Monument signs (See page 72 for waiver criteria)



*Standard box cabinet wall signs are not allowed.*



*Pole signs and Freeway signs along Interstate 30 are not allowed.*

#### 3. The following signs are allowed:

**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: 75 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.

## 10. Signs (cont.)

### i. Sign Types (cont.):

#### Wall Sign Standards (cont.)—

- Raceways shall be 50% of the letter height and painted to match the building/ background OR if the Raceway is used as the sign background, the Raceway may extend 3 inches beyond the largest part of the sign.
- Signs on side or rear building elevations for a ground floor business are permitted, provided that the elevation contains a public entrance.



Above: The raceway is painted to match the background.



Above: Raceways less than 50% of the height of the letters and not painted to match the background are not allowed.



## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

#### i. Sign Types:

**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
- Maximum projection width: 4 feet
- Exception: When existing signs on the same block-face project further than 4 feet, the new sign may match the smallest projection over 4 feet.
- No sign projection shall encroach over public property except in accordance with encroachment agreement provisions outlined in the Sign Code (Chapter 29 of the City Code).



*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.*



*Examples of acceptable blade signs.*

## 10. Signs (cont.)

### i. Sign Types (cont.):

**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 vertical clearance from sidewalk: 8 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
- Awning shape shall relate to the window or door opening
- 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.



*Awnings and canopies enhance building architecture, and add color and interest to the streetscape.*



## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

#### i. Sign Types:

**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 in-tended to be read by pedestrians and by motorists in slow moving vehicles.

- Minimum vertical clearance: 8 feet
- Maximum projection: 4 Feet
- Maximum area per sign face: 8 square feet per sign face
- Maximum total area: 16 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.*





## 10. Signs (cont.)

### i. Sign Types (cont.):

**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. Count toward total allowable sign area if the sign(s) exceed 10% of window space.

- 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.
- Window signs shall not completely obscure visibility into or out of the window. Exceptions may be made by administrative staff for signs that screen utility, mechanical office and kitchen equipment and vacant spaces.
- A maximum of one window sign is permitted per window pane or framed window area.
- Temporary window signs are allowed and shall follow the temporary sign standards.
- Handwritten, paper, cardboard, and plastic signs are not allowed.
- 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.

## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

#### i. Sign Types:

**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.

- 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.



*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.*



## 10. Signs (cont.)

### i. Sign Types (cont.):

**Crown of Building Sign Standards** — 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.

- 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.
- No more than one (1) crown of building sign per façade is allowed.
- Exception: The UDC may approve multiple signs for multiple upper floor tenants, taking the facade size and sign design of the sign and building into consideration.
- 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.
- Letter Height (max): 8 feet
- Width (max percentage of façade length): 75%



## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

#### i. Sign Types:

**Creative Sign Standards** — Creative signs bring fun and vitality to streets and are encouraged. In general, uniquely designed signage should respond to the site, landscape, and architectural design context where they are located. Signs should seek to be 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 Near Southside Development Standards and Guidelines.



*Exciting, interesting, and unusual signs can contribute to the Near Southside's vitality.*



## 10. Signs (cont.)

### i. Sign Types (cont.):

**Temporary Sign Standards** — Temporary signs may be approved administratively 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.



## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

#### i. Sign Types:

**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 and more suburban-style site layouts.

Monument signs are not allowed without a waiver from the UDC. The UDC may grant a waiver for a monument sign, provided that the sign meets all of the requirements below:

- Maximum total area: 60 square feet per sign face
- Maximum height: 8 feet including base.
- Maximum letter height: Building/development name or logo: 8 inches. All others: 4 inches
- Locations are limited to landscaped areas, with a minimum setback from the public-rights-of-ways 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 complements 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.



## 10. Signs (cont.)

### i. Sign Types (cont.):

**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 UDC and shall receive a recommendation prior to seeking a special exception from the Board of Adjustment.
- 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.
- Animation, rolling or running letters or message, flashing lights, or displays is prohibited.
- All sound is prohibited.



*Brightly lit changeable copy signs add to the energy and vibrancy of the area.*

## 5.F. Architectural Standards (cont.)

### 10. Signs (cont.)

#### i. Sign Types:

**Freeway Sign Standards**— A Freeway sign is a sign which is oriented to be viewed primarily from an adjacent non-signalized freeway.

- Freeway signs are not allowed along Interstate 30 and associated front-age roads.
- Maximum height: 25 feet allowed at the right-of-way line and one additional foot in height for each one foot of setback, up to 35 feet. Set back sign one foot for each foot in height from all adjacent property lines. (Administrative approval allowed for up to 50 feet in height to allow sign to be 20 feet above adjacent main travel lanes of freeway.)
- Maximum width: 24 feet
- Maximum advertised message area: 320 square feet
- Minimum ground contact: 25% of structure's width





## 10. Signs (cont.)

### i. Sign Types (cont.):

**Rooftop Sign Standards**— A Rooftop sign is any sign erected, constructed or maintained on the roof of a building.

Signs may be installed upon the roof subject to the following conditions:

- The area of the sign shall not exceed 10 percent of the area of the closest wall of the building above which the sign is placed.
- The sign shall not exceed four feet above the roof or top of the parapet wall at the roof, whichever is higher.
- All roof signs placed upon a building or buildings upon one platted lot shall be similar in size, shape, area, and design.

