

# Appendix G

## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SIGNAGE

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*LAST UPDATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2008*

*CASE NUMBER: TA081101*

# APPENDIX G: DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SIGNAGE

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

These guidelines are designed to help ensure the erection of quality signs that communicate their message in a clear fashion. The guidelines contained in this appendix are not presented as specific sign standards compared to those contained in Article 9 of this Code. The Development Review Committee (DRC) of the Planning and Development Department of the City of Grand Prairie may interpret these design guidelines with some flexibility when applied to specific signs or projects, as not all design criteria may be practical for each site or location. In some circumstances, one guideline may be modified to facilitate compliance with another guideline determined by the DRC to be more important in the particular case. The overall objective is to ensure that the intent and spirit of these guidelines are followed when developing criteria for Unified Signage Plans, corridor overlay districts and large scale planned development districts.

### G.1 Compatibility with Surroundings:

**G.1.1 Proportional Size and Scale.** The scale of signs should be based on the building façade on which they are placed and the area in which they are located. The size and shape of a sign should be proportional with the scale of the structure. Large storefronts, such as those incorporated into a big box retail development, will be allowed to have proportionally larger signs than smaller storefronts. Signs should not visually compete with the building façade on which it is placed.



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**G.1.2 Integrate Signs with Building.** Signs should be designed so that they are integrated with the design of the building – particularly with respect to a building’s profile and massing characteristics. A well-designed building façade or storefront is created by careful coordination of signage and architectural design, and a coordinated color scheme. Signs in multi-tenant buildings should be designed to complement or enhance the other signs in the building. Sign placement and design should be reviewed within the context of building design.



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### G.2 Location and Mounting:

**G.2.1** Signs should be mounted in locations that respect the design of a building and site, including the arrangement of bays and openings. Signs should not obscure windows, (including second story windows), window trim/molding, grillwork, piers, pilasters and other ornamental features.

**G.2.2** Attached signs on fascias above storefront windows should be sized to fit within existing friezes, lintels, spandrels, and other such features and not extend above, below, or beyond them. Typically, attached signs should be centered on horizontal surfaces (e.g., over a storefront opening).

**G.2.3** When a large building contains several storefronts, signs for the individual business should relate well to each other in terms of locations, height, proportion, color and illumination. Maintaining continuity will reinforce the building’s façade composition while retaining each business’s identity.



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### G.3 Color:

- G.3.1 Avoid Using Too Many Colors.** Colors or color combinations that interfere with legibility of the sign copy, or that interfere with viewer identification of other signs, should be avoided.
- G.3.2 Use Contrasting Colors.** Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. A substantial contrast should be provided between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible. Light letters on a dark background work best for both day and night time use.



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### G.4 Materials:

- G.4.1 Compatibility of Materials.** Sign materials should be compatible with the design of the façade on which they are placed. Consider the architectural design of the building's façade and select materials that complement the design. The selected materials should also contribute to the legibility of the sign. For example, glossy finishes are often difficult to read because of glare and reflections.
- G.4.2 Appropriate Materials.** Sign materials should be extremely durable. Paper and cloth signs are not suitable for exterior use (except on awnings) because they deteriorate quickly. If wood is used, it should be of a high quality and properly sealed to keep moisture from soaking into the wood, which will cause the sign's lettering to deteriorate.

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### G.5. Sign Legibility:

- G.5.1 Concise Name Identification.** A concise name or limited lines of copy should be used whenever possible given the limited amount of time the vehicle traveling public has to identify and read the sign. The fewer number of words, the more effective the sign. A simple and succinct sign is easier to read and looks more attractive because it is less cluttered.
- G.5.2 Use Symbols and Logos.** Symbols and logos can be used in place of words whenever appropriate. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message. They can be used as an expression of the owner's creativity.
- G.5.3 Limit the Number of Letter Styles.** The number of lettering styles that are used on a sign should be limited in order to increase legibility. As a general rule, limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs. Intricate typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.



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### G.6 Sign Illumination:

- G.6.1 Internal Illumination.** Individually illuminated letters, either internally illuminated or backlit solid letters (reverse channel) are a preferred alternative to internally illuminated plastic cabinet signs. Signs comprised of individual letters mounted directly on a structure can often use a distinctive element of the structure's facade as a backdrop, thereby providing a better integration of the sign with the structure.
- G.6.2 Use a Projected Light Source.** Signs along roadways with slower moving traffic or in pedestrian oriented environments should consider illumination by a projected light source. Projection lighting is usually a better alternative because the sign will appear to be integrated with the building's architecture. Light fixtures supported in front of the sign cast light on the sign and generally a portion of the building's face as well. Projected lighting emphasizes the continuity of the structure's surface and signs become an integral part of the facade. The use of small, unobtrusive fixtures for external (projection) lighting is encouraged. Avoid the use of oversized fixtures that are out of scale with the sign and structure (e.g. flood lighting). Whenever projection lighting is used (fluorescent or incandescent), care should be taken to properly shield the light source to prevent glare from spilling over into residential areas and any public right-of-way. Signs should be lighted only to the minimum level required for nighttime readability.

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- G.6.3 Cabinet Signs.** The use of internally illuminated cabinet signs is discouraged. When such signs are proposed, the background field is required to be opaque so that only the lettering appears illuminated (e.g., routed or push-through lettering/graphics). When the background is not opaque, the entire sign face becomes bright and the sign becomes visually separated from the building. As a result, this type of sign can disrupt the continuity of the facade.



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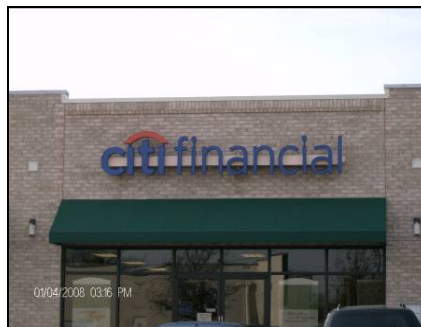


*Discouraged*

- G.6.4 Electrical Raceways and Conduits.** Electrical transformer boxes and raceways should be concealed from public view. If a raceway cannot be mounted internally behind the finished exterior wall, the exposed metal surfaces of the raceway should be finished to match the background wall, or be integrated into the overall design of the sign. If raceways are necessary, they should be as thin and narrow as possible and should never extend in width or height beyond the area of the sign's lettering or graphics. All exposed conduit and junction boxes should also be concealed from public view.



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**G.6.5 Neon Signs. Neon/L.E.D.** Neon signs or similar sign types are encouraged pending they meet the requirements for illuminated sign standards listed in Article 9 of this Code



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**G.7 Shopping Center Monument Signs:**

**G.7.1** Freestanding signs are allowed to display a limited number of individual tenant signs and the name of the center. An excessive amount of message panels could make the sign ineffective in conveying a message and could potentially pose a safety hazard.

**G.7.2** Individual tenant sign panels should be uniform in size. The address, the name of the center or the major anchor tenant may have a larger sign panel.

**G.7.3** The sign structure should be architecturally designed and incorporate design details, materials and colors that reflect those used for the associated buildings.

**G.7.4** The size of the sign should be primarily dependent on the speed of the traffic viewing the sign and the distance from the roadway.

**G.7.5** Monument signs should include a landscaping element at their base.



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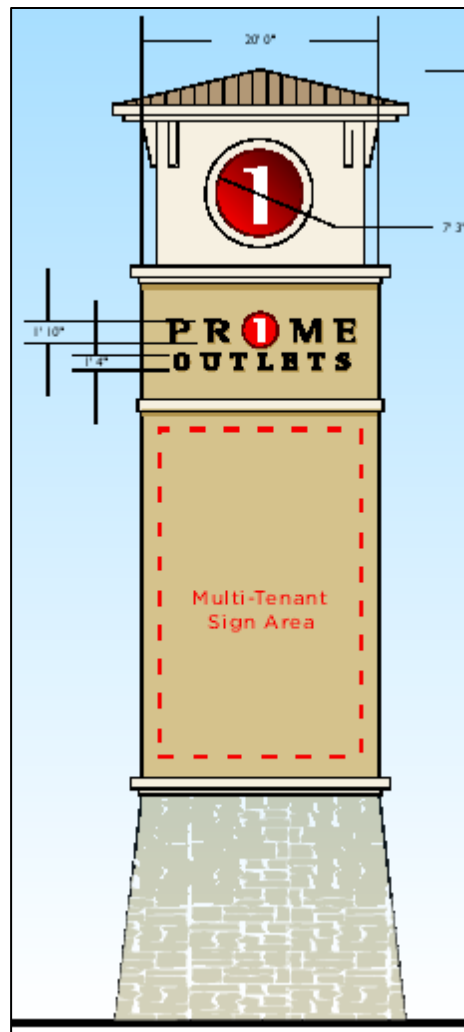
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### G.8 Shopping Center Store Signage:

- G.8.1 Require consistency (color, size, etc.) with tenant signage in shopping centers.
- G.8.2 A coordinated Unified Signage Plan, as defined in Section 9.16.1 of this Code, should be utilized for multi-tenant development.
- G.8.3 The use of hand painted signs, as defined in Section 9.4.22 of this Code, or similar signs not produced by mechanical means shall be prohibited.
- G.8.4 Multi-tenant signs shall be permitted for the purpose of consolidating several signs on one sign structure as defined in Section 9.6.1 of this Code. No on-premise pole signs shall be permitted for businesses that already have an identification panel on a multi-tenant sign.

#### ENCOURAGED MULTI TENANT SIGN EXAMPLE



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### G.9 Multi-Story Corporate Offices and Hotels:

- G.9.1** Signs should be limited to monuments signs and possibly a single façade sign of appropriate scale and size that identifies the name of the major tenant or building.
- G.9.2 Corporate Franchise Signage.** Corporate franchise signage should conform to the project's identity and architectural theme while maintaining some elements of corporate identity. Corporate logos should fit into the context of existing building color and scale.



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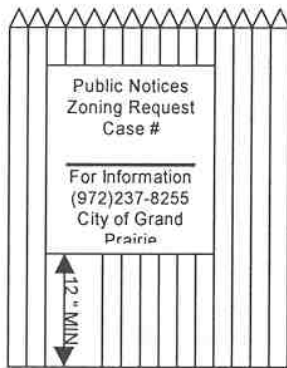
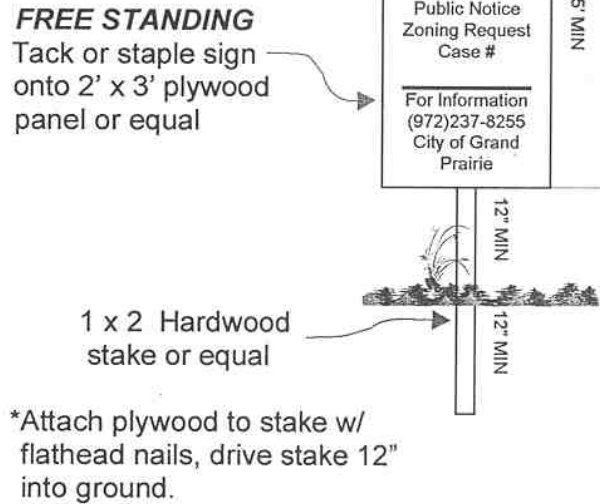
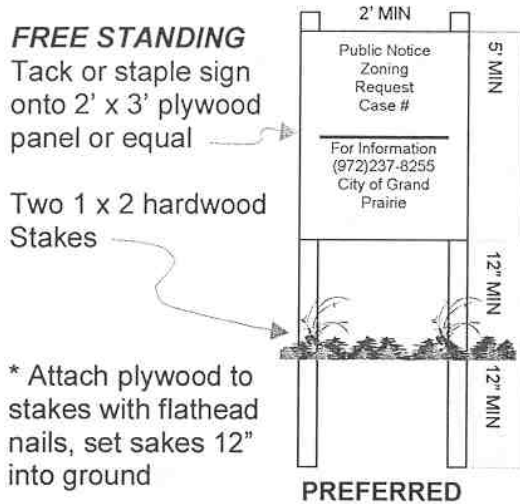
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## G.10 Posting Signs for Public Hearing:

### Sign Posting Recommendations



**ALTERNATIVE**  
Signs may be mounted on existing Fences (wood or non masonry). Attach Securely with wire, flathead nails, or other Suitable metal fasteners.

**Acceptable**  
In addition to methods shown, Zoning notification signs may be attached to Real Estate signs, or otherwise posted in a manner that allows good legibility for the duration of the notification period.