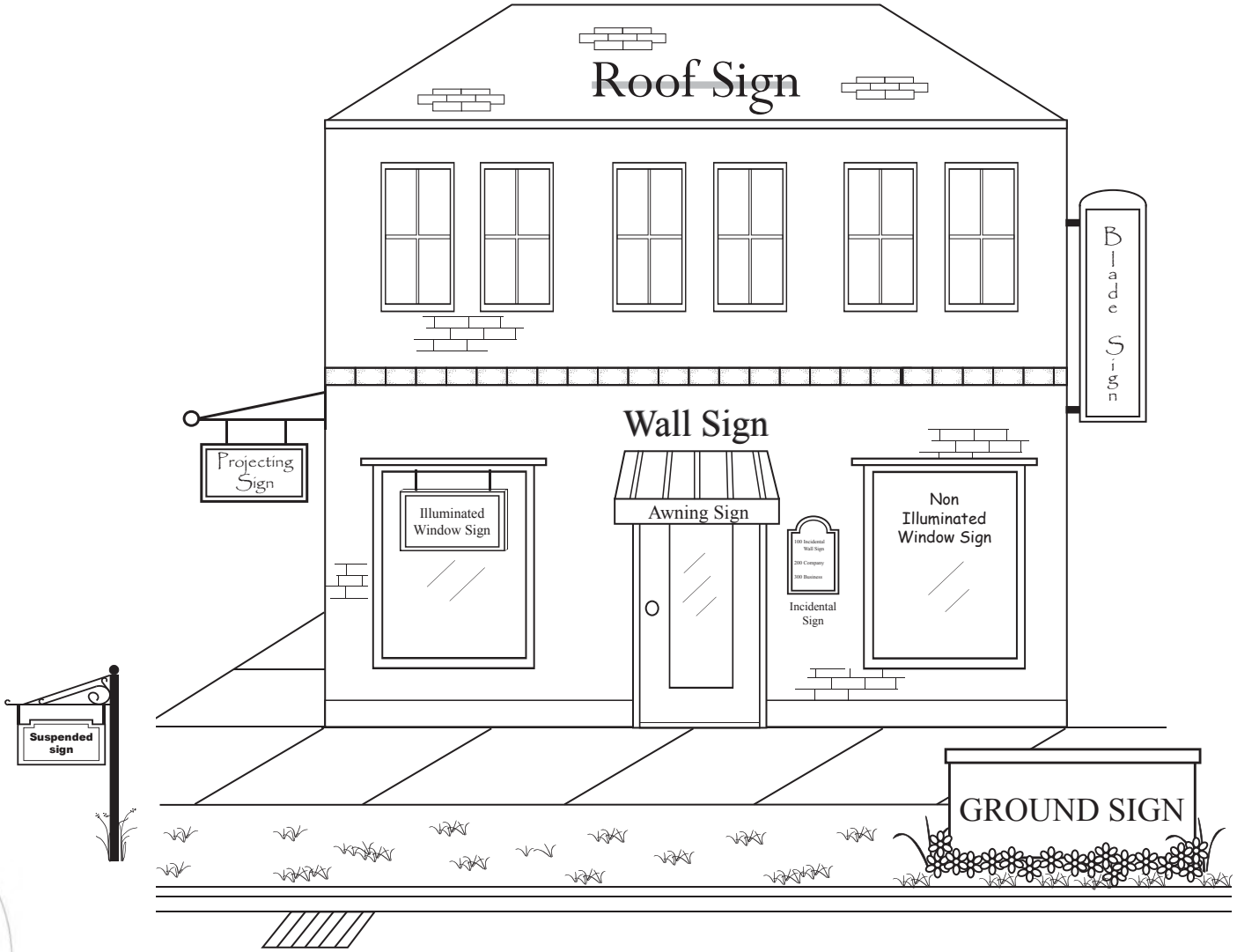
CITY OF CARMEL SIGN ORDINANCE VISUAL GUIDE



*** This document serves as a visual guide and does not represent the Unified Development Ordinance Section 5.39 in its entirety. Please confirm details and allowances with the Department of Community Services ***

CITY OF CARMEL
A PARTNERSHIP
FOR TOMORROW

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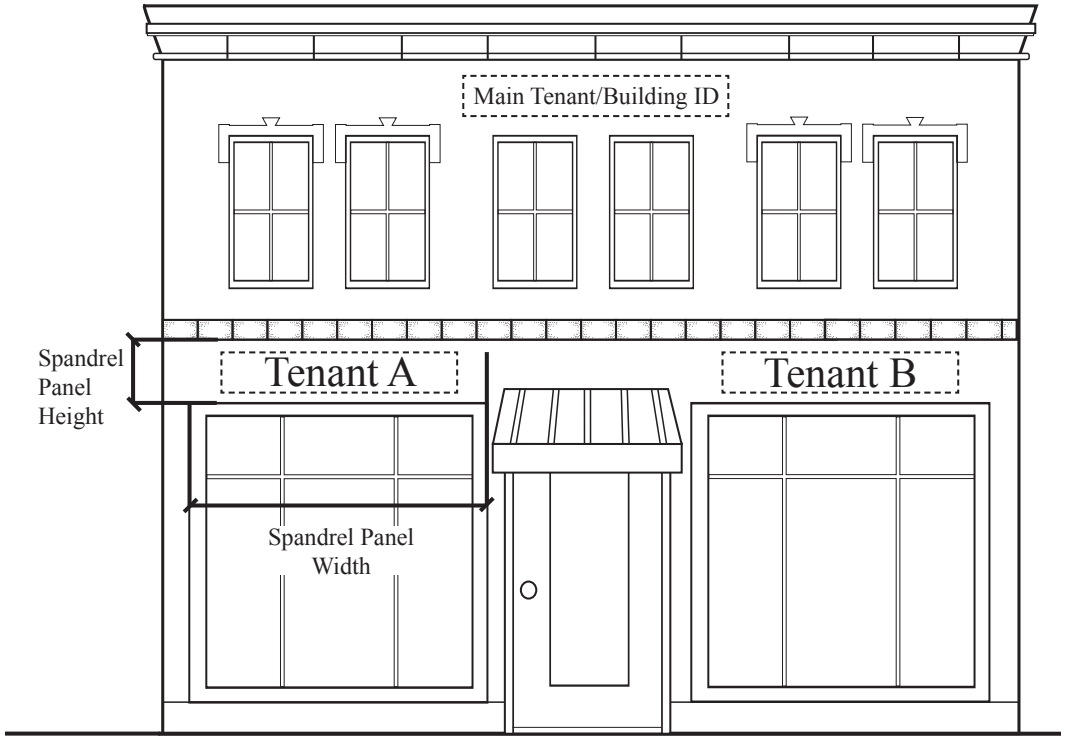
WALL SIGNS



SPANDREL PANEL

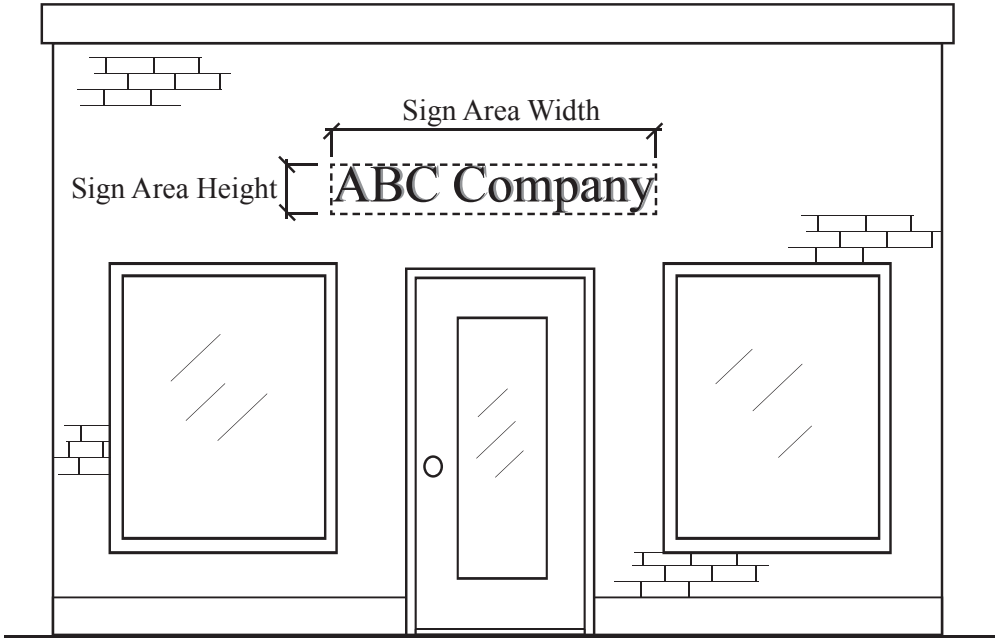
A Spandrel Panel is the area on a building facing the public street where a sign can be placed. It is typically defined by different architectural features on the building. Some of these features could be the top or bottom of a window, an architectural accent piece such as a keystone, an awning, the cornice or roof line, a light fixture or even a vent. These features help to define a symmetrical and aesthetically pleasing area where a sign would be best placed.

A Wall sign's size is limited to 70 percent of the Spandrel Panel's height and 85 percent of the Spandrel Panel's width. If there is an architectural feature that prevents a sign from being readable to pedestrians or vehicular traffic, an increase of up to 10 percent of the width is allowed to aid in visibility.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(E)(5); 5.39(H); & 5.39(I)

WALL SIGNS



CHANNEL LETTER

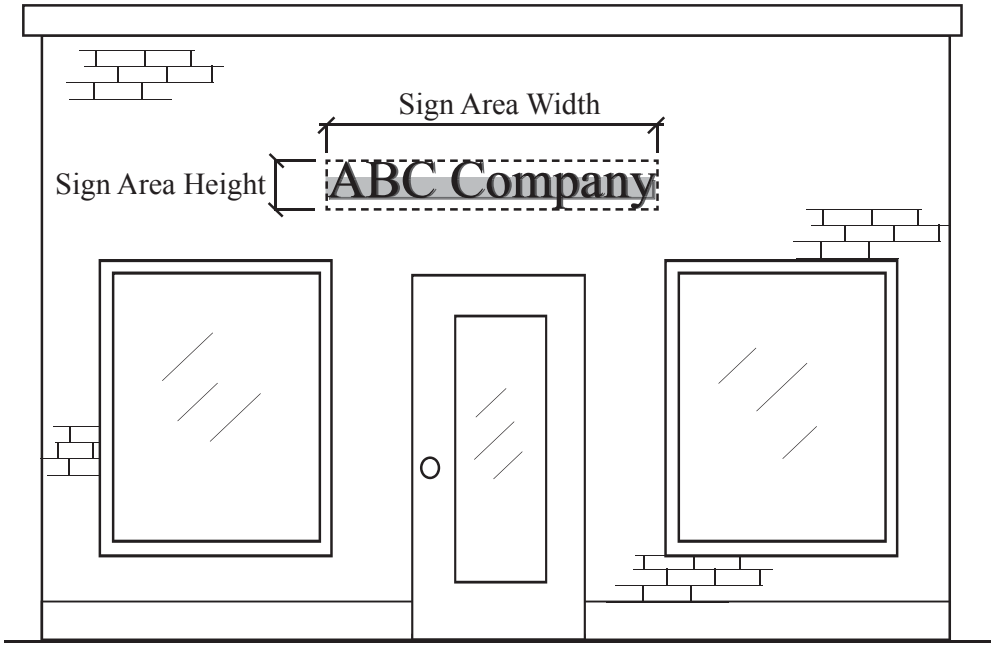
A Channel Letter sign is composed of individually installed letters that may be illuminated or non-illuminated. Types of illumination may include external, internal, or back-lit/reverse (halo effect).

Each letter of a channel letter sign is installed directly to the fascia of a building. This type of sign is the most common and preferred type of sign in the City of Carmel.

The area of a Channel Letter sign is measured as if a rectangle were drawn around all of the copy and logos. The area of the sign is then based off of the height and width. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example. The maximum sign area for Wall signs is determined by the Spandrel Panel (see page 3).

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(F); 5.39(H); & 5.39(I)



RACEWAY

A Raceway Sign consists of individual letters mounted to a "Raceway" instead of directly to the fascia of a building. The Raceway acts as a support structure for the letters and electrical equipment. Raceways are beneficial when the fascia material is difficult to repair.

Raceways vary in length and depth, but should never exceed the height of the smallest letter or the length of the letters in the sign. A Raceway should be painted to match the color of the building it is installed on, so that it blends into the fascia.

The area of a raceway wall sign is measured as if a rectangle were drawn around all of the copy and logos. The area of the sign is then based off the height and width. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example. The maximum sign area for Wall signs is determined by the Spandrel Panel (see page 3).

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(F); 5.39(H); & 5.39(I)

WALL SIGNS

CABINET SIGN

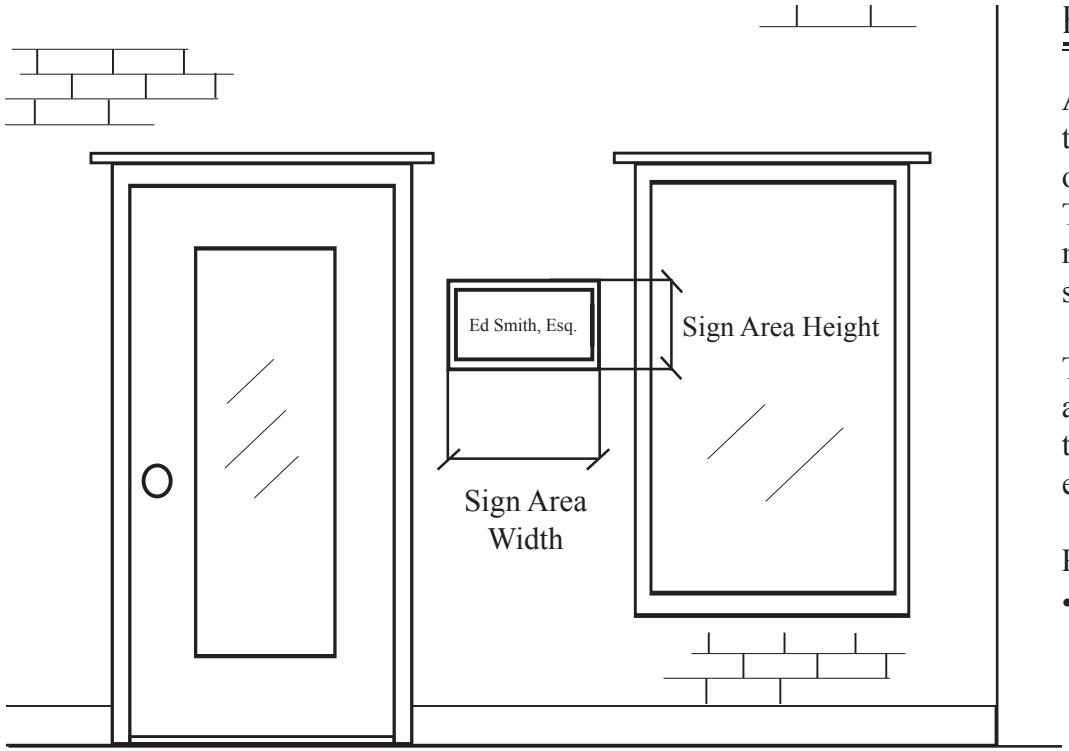
A Cabinet sign has a metal box "frame" that is installed directly to the fascia of a building and is internally illuminated. The face of the sign can be a flexible plastic or aluminum with applied vinyl graphics.

A way of making a cabinet sign look more like a Channel Letter sign is to have the background of the sign opaque. This means no light shines through the background, only through the copy of the sign. This practice is becoming more common in the City of Carmel.

The area for a Cabinet Wall sign will be determined based on the total area of the sign. The maximum sign area for Wall signs is determined by the Spandrel Panel (see page 3). Please refer to the drawing to the left when calculating the area of a Cabinet Wall sign.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(F); 5.39(H); & 5.39(I)



HOME OCCUPATION WALL SIGN

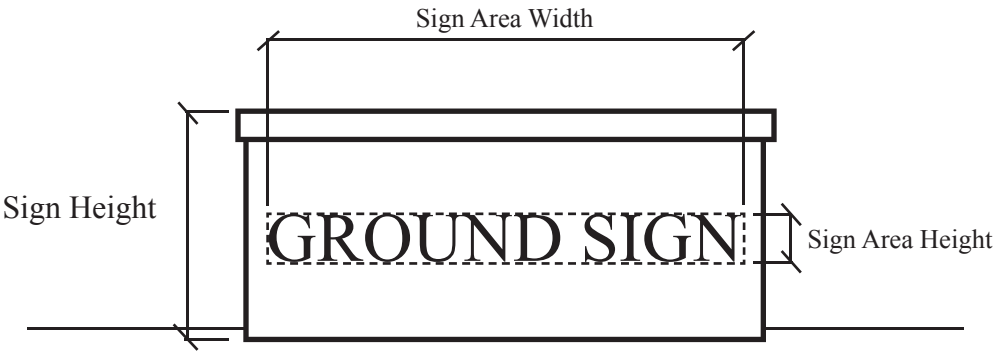
A Home Occupation Wall sign is typically placed on the wall by the main entrance to a home occupation. It identifies the name and occupation of the premises on which the sign is located.
The design of this sign should be a close match to the coloring and materials of the other main identification signs for a building. It shall not be illuminated.

The area of a Home Occupation wall sign is based off of the height and width of the entire sign. Signs may be a maximum area of three square feet. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example.

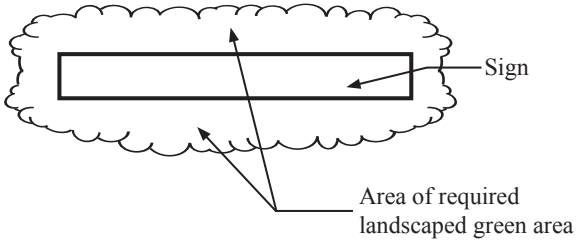
Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(G)

GROUND SIGNS



Plan View



GROUND SIGN

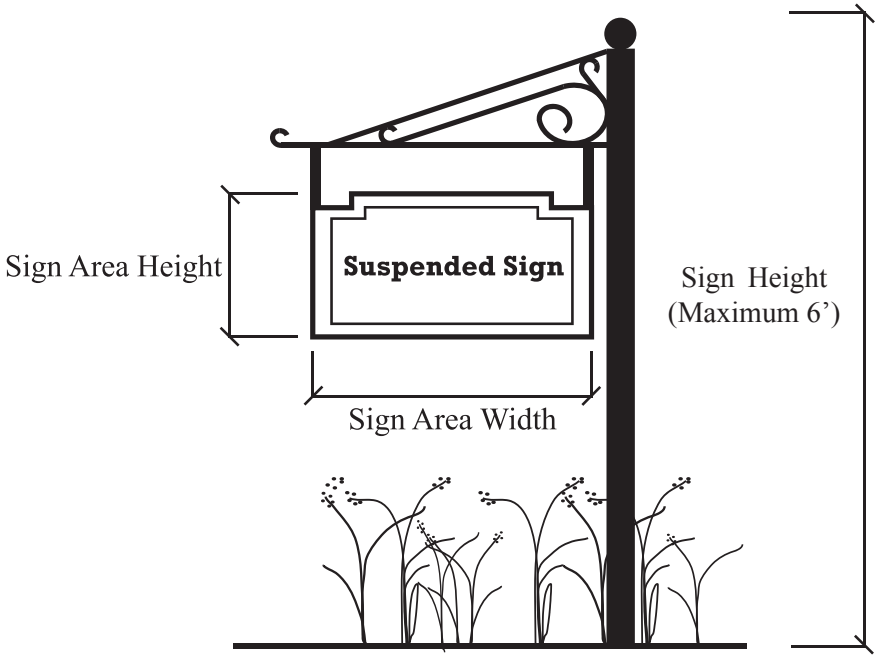
A Ground sign is used to identify a business when a Wall sign may not be practical. It is generally placed perpendicular to the road near the entry driveway so that it is visible to both directions of traffic. Ground signs should be constructed of durable materials of a permanent nature, such as brick, stone, aluminum or wood. Additionally, the base shall be made of a masonry material.

A Ground sign shall have a Landscaped Green Area that is equal to the area of the sign. It may be internally, externally, or non-illuminated. Please see the photos below for examples of well-designed and landscaped ground signs.

The area of a Ground sign is measured as if a rectangle were drawn around all of the copy and logos of the sign. The area of the sign is then based off the height and width of this rectangle. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(E); 5.39(F); 5.39(H); 5.39(I); & Sign Chart A: Ground Sign



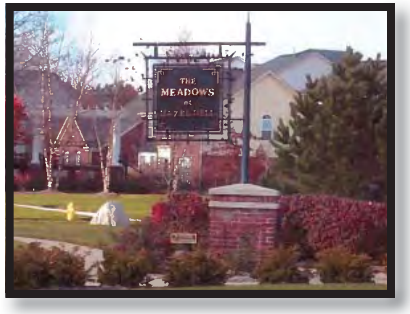
SUSPENDED SIGN

Because Ground signs are prohibited on residential structures that have been converted to commercial or office uses, Suspended signs are an alternative option. Suspended signs are constructed of a post and decorative arm configuration where the sign hangs or is suspended from the arm.

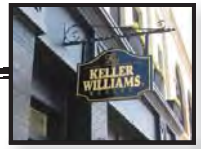
A Ground sign shall have a Landscaped Green Area that is equal to the area of the sign. The area for a Suspended sign is based off of the height and width of the entire sign. Please see the drawing to the left for an example. The pictures below represent examples of well-designed Suspended signs.

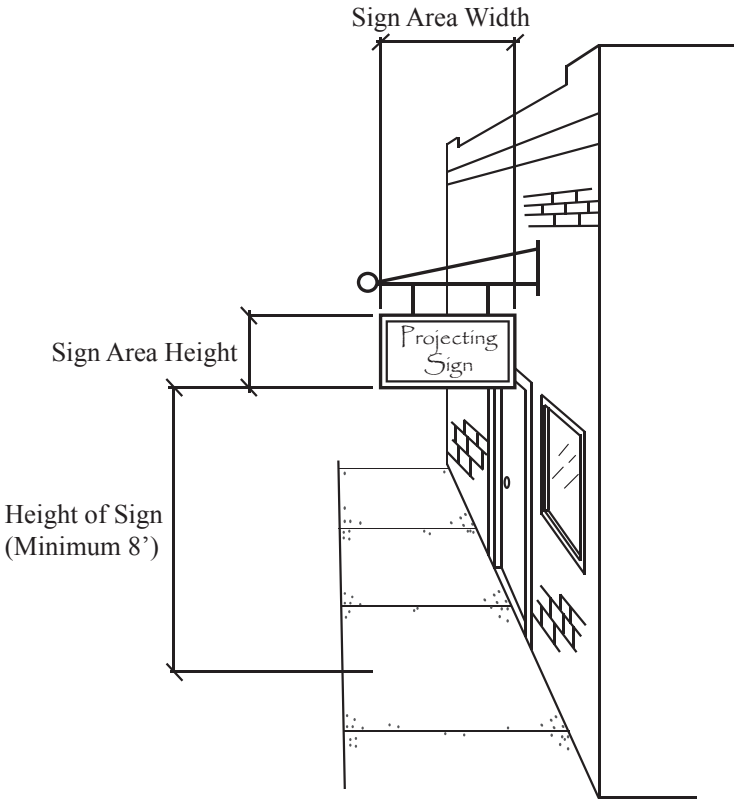
Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(F) & 5.39(H)



PROJECTING SIGNS





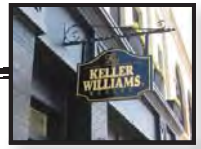
PROJECTING SIGN

A Projecting sign is typically used in pedestrian friendly areas and should project outward from the building at a 90 degree angle. Copy is typically placed on both sides of the sign. It usually has a decorative support structure or arm. Creativity is encouraged when designing this support structure.

The area of a Projecting sign is based off of the height and width of the entire sign. A Projecting sign must measure a minimum distance of eight feet from ground level to the bottom of the sign, shall not extend more than five feet from the face of the building, and shall be located a minimum of two feet behind the curb. The sign may be internally, externally, or non-illuminated. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(F); 5.39(H); & 5.39(I)



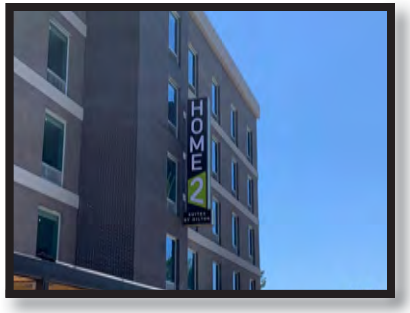
BLADE SIGN

A blade sign is a vertically oriented sign and is best used for a building that is placed close to the street. It aids in direct visibility for car travelers from two directions. It is also commonly referred to as a Projecting sign. This type of sign is typically used on buildings two stories or taller, for identification of the main building tenant or the building name. It may be internally, externally, or non-illuminated.

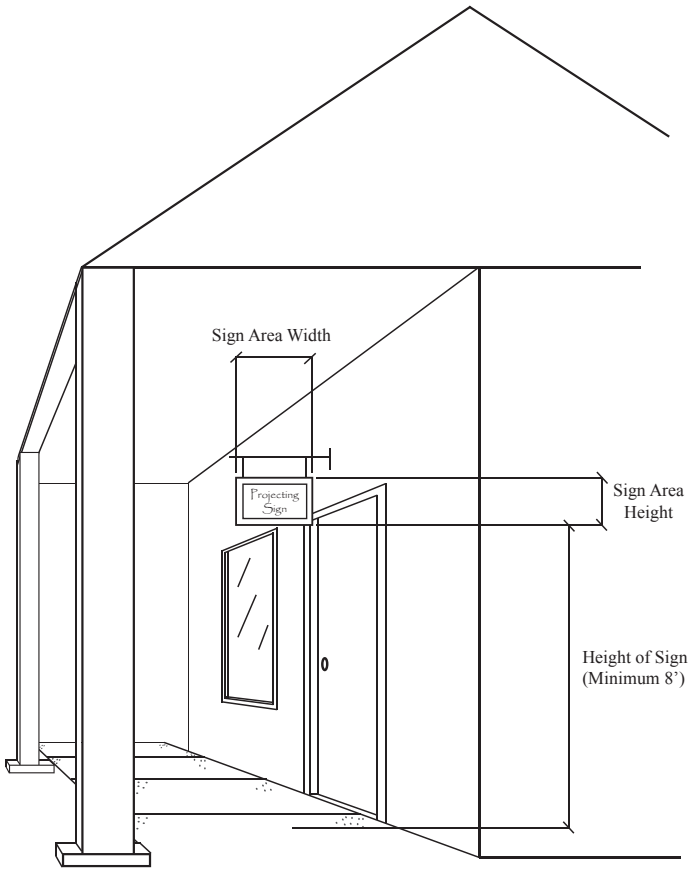
The area of a Blade sign is measured as if a rectangle were drawn around all of the logo and copy of the sign. The area of the sign is then based off the height and width of this rectangle. A Projecting sign must measure a minimum distance of eight feet from ground level to the bottom of the sign, shall not extend more than five feet from the face of the building, and shall be located a minimum of two feet behind the curb. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(F); 5.39(H); & 5.39(I)



PROJECTING SIGNS



SECONDARY PROJECTING SIGN

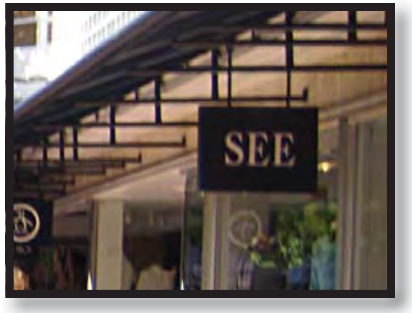
A Secondary Projecting sign is used in pedestrian friendly areas for identification of a tenant space where the main Wall sign is not visible to the pedestrian.

This sign would typically be placed underneath an awning or overhang. It could also be hung from a ceiling if there is not an overhang, so long as it aids pedestrian way finding. It may be internally, externally, or non-illuminated.

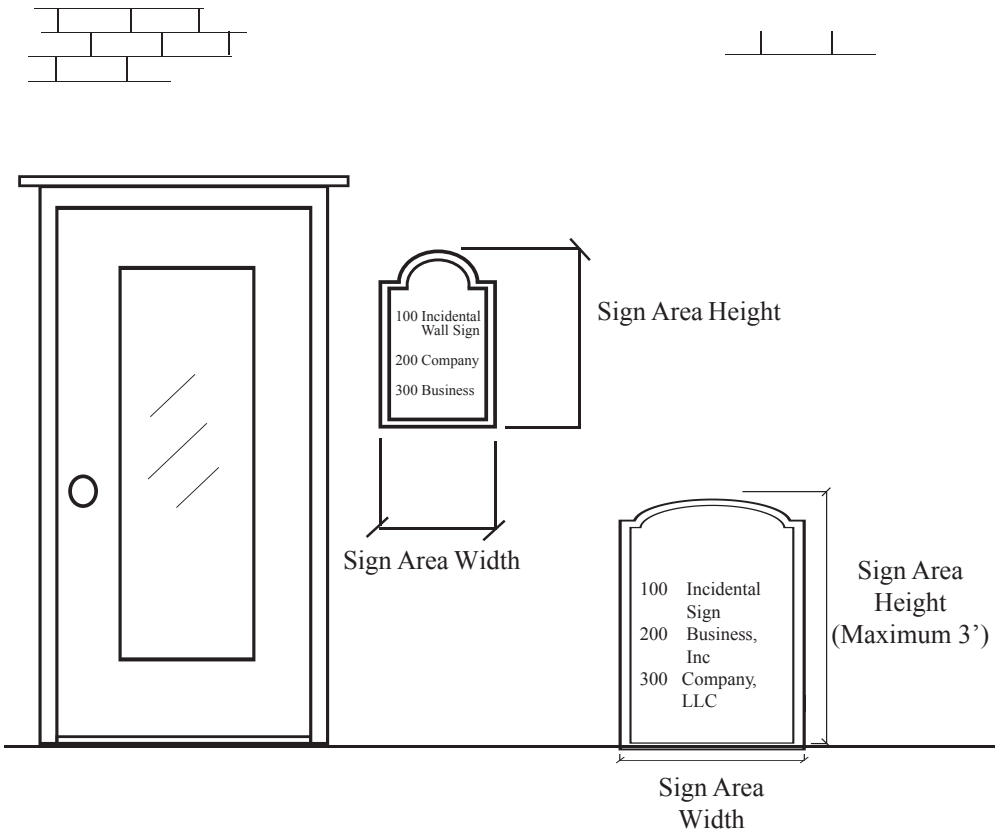
The maximum allowable sign area is five square feet. This is allowed in addition to any other permanent sign for Multi-Tenant Ground Floor tenants.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(I)



INCIDENTAL SIGNS



INCIDENTAL

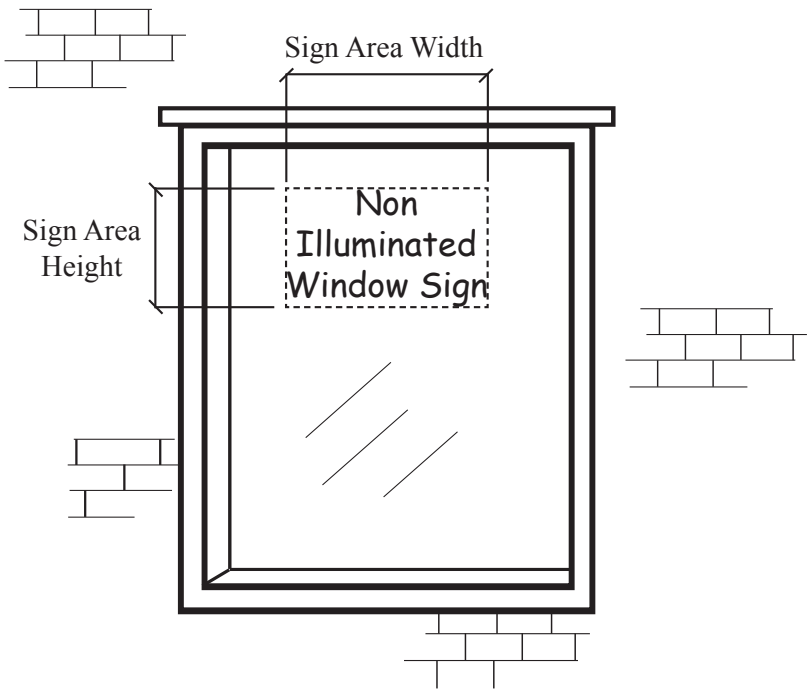
An Incidental Sign is used to identify multiple businesses in the same building or complex and to the correct business or building by displaying the address or suite associated with each business.

An Incidental Sign is typically placed on the wall by the main entrance or nearby in a Landscaped Green Area that is equal to the area of the sign. The design of this sign should be a close match to the coloring and materials of the other main identification signs for a building. It may be internally, externally, or non-illuminated.

The area of an Incidental Sign is based off of the height and width of the entire sign. Signs 3 square feet or less in area are considered incidental and are exempt from the sign ordinance, however, staff will need to review any proposals. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(C)(4)



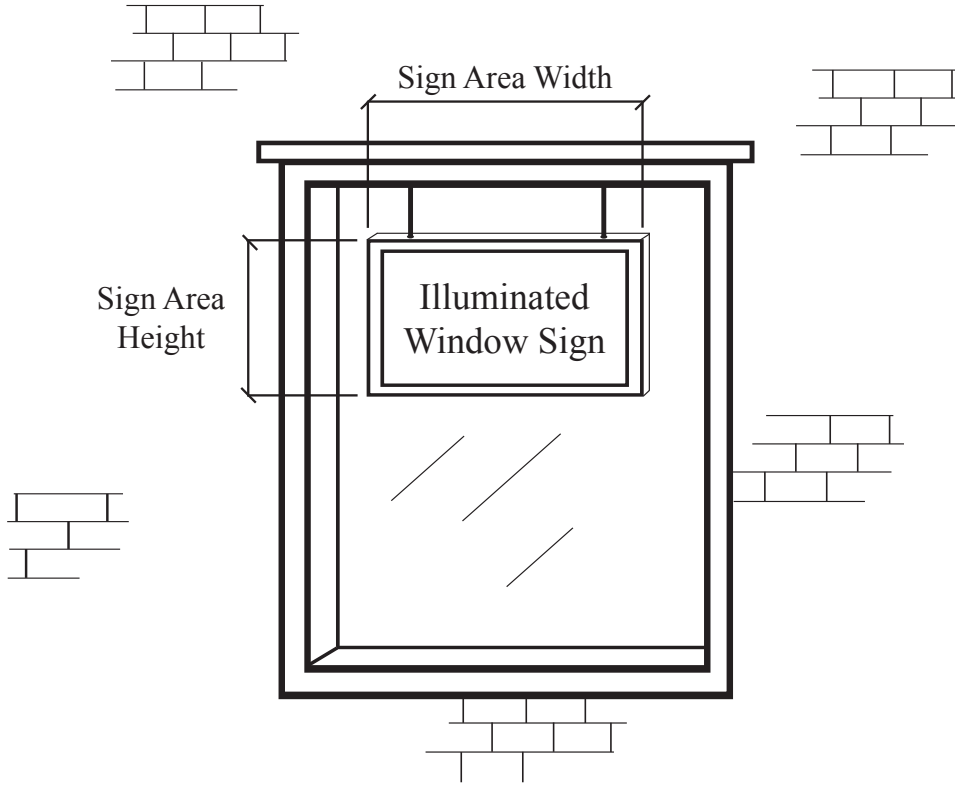
NON-ILLUMINATED WINDOW SIGN

Non-Illuminated Window signs can include letters or graphics that adhere to the window or even signs that are painted on the window and can be easily removed.

The Non-Illuminated Window sign cannot cover more than 30 percent of the total window area of a building facade. The area for a Non-Illuminated Window sign is measured as if a rectangle were drawn around all of the letters of the sign. The area of the sign is then based off of the height and width of this rectangle. Please see the drawing to the left for an example.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(J)



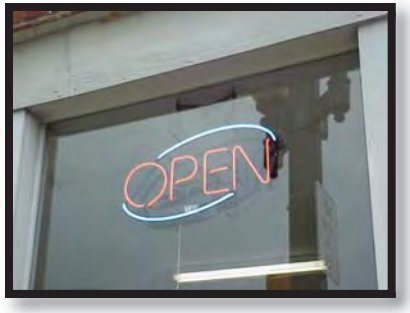
ILLUMINATED WINDOW SIGN

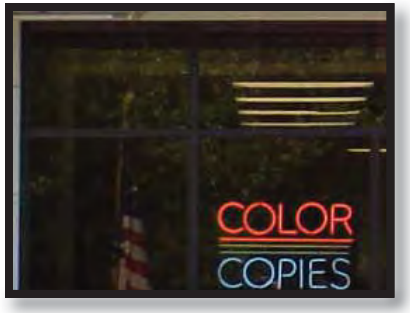
Illuminated Window signs are signs that can be seen through a window and contain some type of lighting element, such as fluorescent tube or LED light. Businesses typically have an “open” sign as the permitted Illuminated Window sign. Only one Illuminated Window sign is allowed per business.

The area for an Illuminated Window sign is based off of the height and width of the entire sign. The maximum sign area is three square feet. Blinking or moving signs shall not be permitted. Please see the drawing to the left for an example.

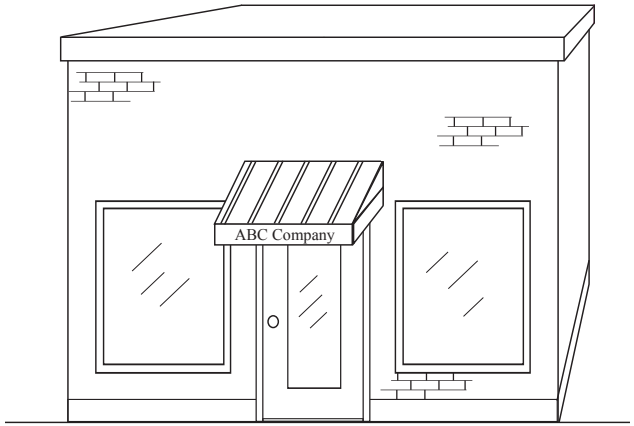
Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

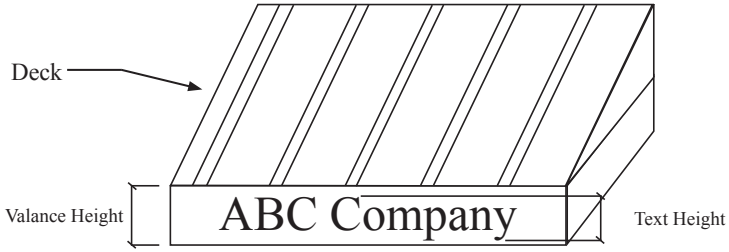
- 5.39(J)(2)





AWNING SIGNS





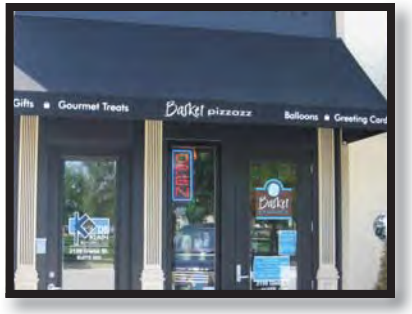
AWNING SIGN

An Awning sign can either be a secondary wall sign or main identification sign. A business may have an Awning sign in addition to a wall sign if the total area of both signs does not exceed the total allotted square footage. An awning sign may also serve as the primary identification sign and is then treated as a wall sign with the awning deck serving as the Spandrel Panel (see page 3).

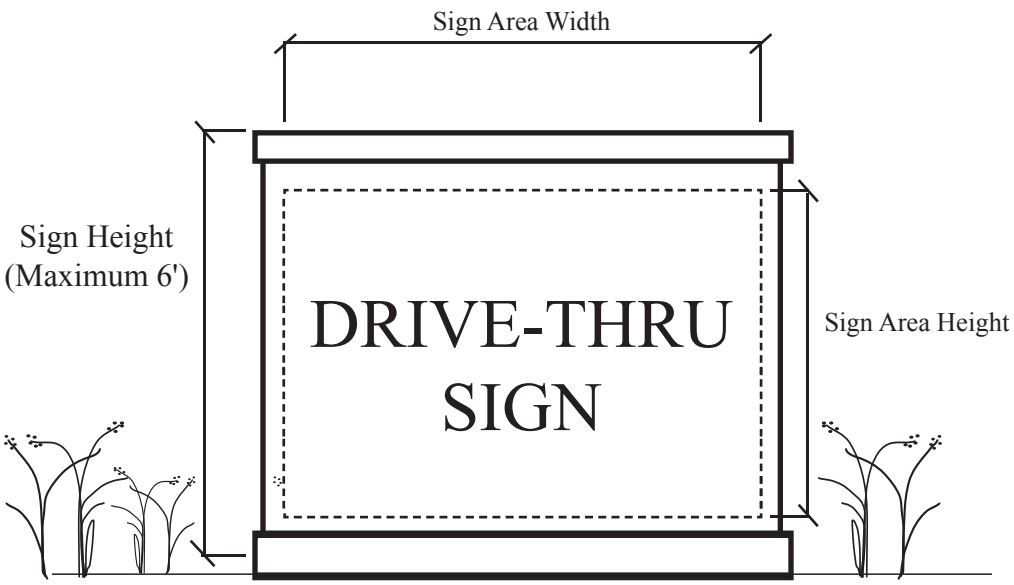
Awning signs are useful when a tenant wants to display some of their products. This is typically done on the valence of an awning. Signs placed on the awning deck are typically graphic logos. Awning signs may be externally illuminated or indirectly illuminated by building accent lights. Please refer to the drawings to the left for an example.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(H) & 5.39(I)



DRIVE-THRU SIGNS



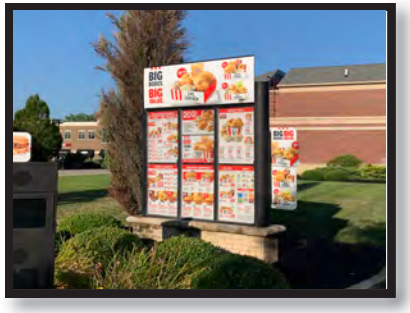
DRIVE-THRU SIGN

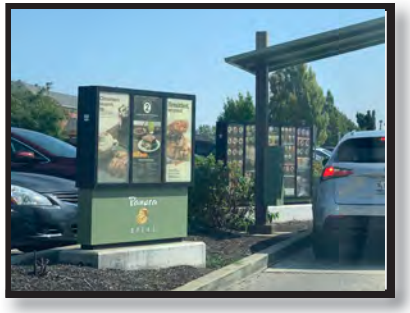
Drive-Thru signs are classified as ground signs and are allotted two per establishment. The base of the sign shall be constructed of a sign masonry material to match the design of the building and must be located in line with the drive-thru lane while shielded from street view. These signs may utilize Electronic Message Boards, however, messages shall not change more than one time per ten seconds.

Drive-Thru signs must be no taller than 6’ from the ground. Sign area is regulated at 50 square feet total between the two signs with a maximum sign area of 30 square feet per sign.

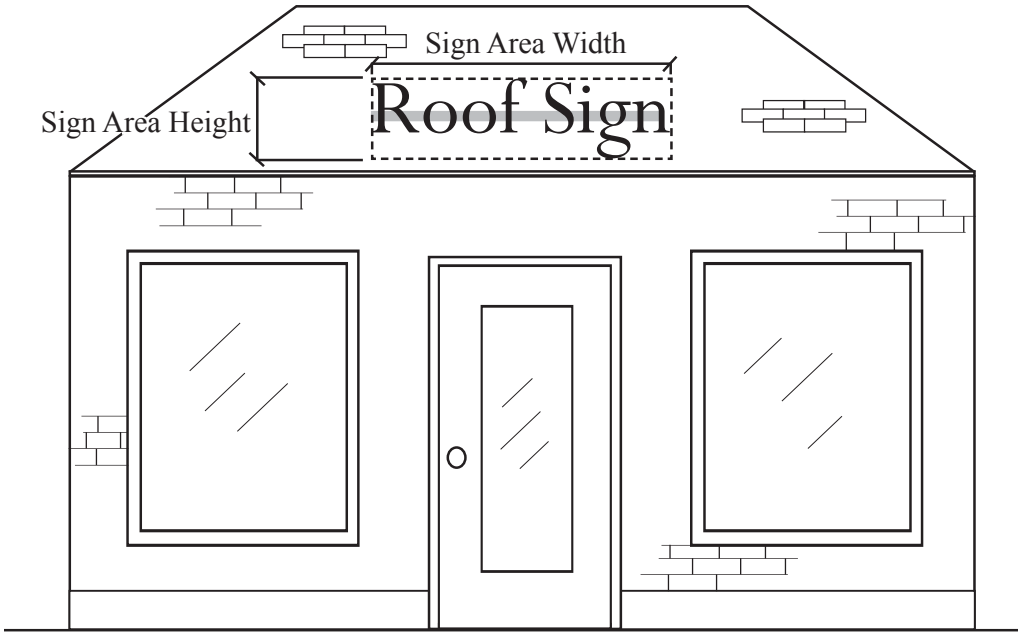
Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(K)





ROOF SIGNS



ROOF SIGN

Roof signs are only allowed when there is no space for a (traditional) Wall sign. It is typically supported by a raceway and frame, to ensure that the sign is vertically aligned with the building façade.

The area for a Roof sign is measured as if a rectangle were drawn around all the letters of the business name. The area of the sign is then based off of the height and width of this rectangle. Please refer to the drawing to the left for an example.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(H) & 5.39(I)

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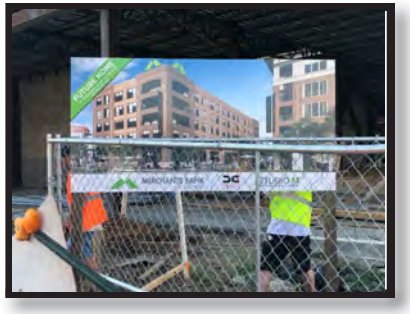
CONSTRUCTION SITE SIGN

Construction Site signs are temporary signs classified as ground signs and are allowed one sign per street frontage. The sign must be located at least 5’ from the street right-of-way and be constructed of a rigid substrate material with a durable sign face.

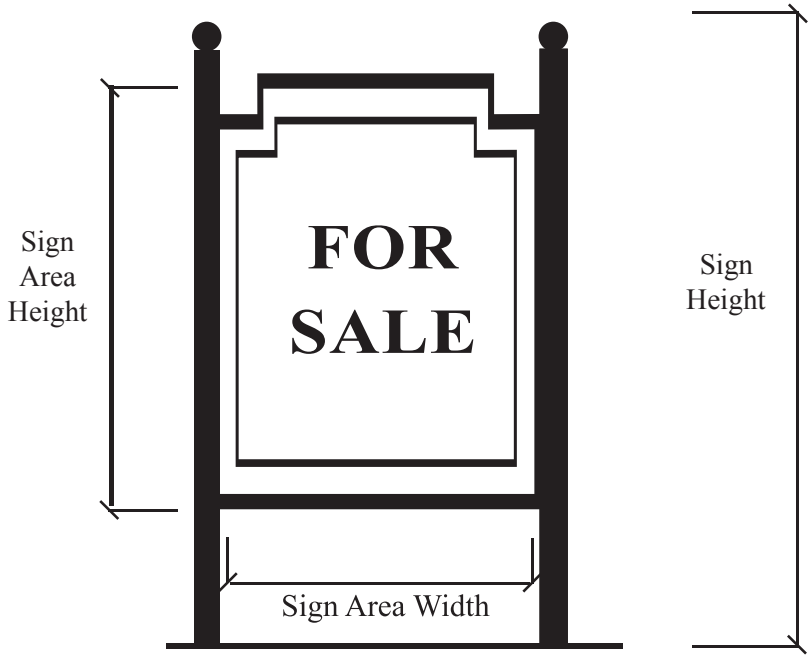
Construction Site signs must be no taller than 8’ from the ground and maximum sign area is dependent on the district of the property. Sign area is determined by the maximum height and maximum width of the sign. Permit approval is required if sign area exceeds 6 square feet.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(M) & 5.39(N)



TEMPORARY SIGNS



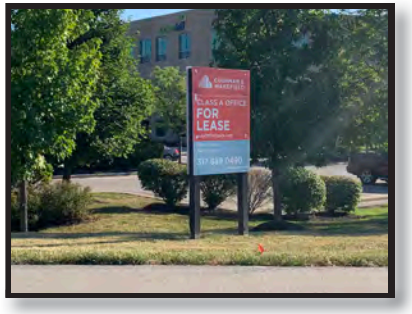
FOR SALE / LEASE SIGN

For Sale/Lease signs are temporary signs classified as ground signs that are allowed one sign per property frontage when the property is being offered for sale through a licensed agent or owner of the property. The sign must be located at least 5' from the street right-of-way.

For Sale/Lease sign area and height of ground sign depends on the district and lot size of the property. Sign area is determined by the maximum height and maximum width of the sign. Permit approval is required if sign area exceeds 6 square feet.

Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(M) & 5.39(O)



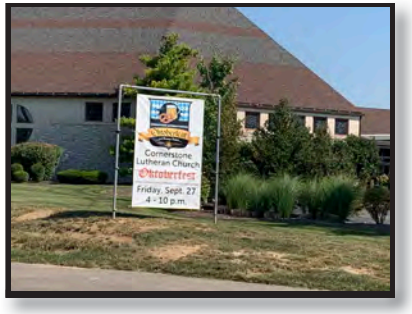
BANNER SIGN

Banner signs are Temporary signs classified as either street and interim banners. Street Banner signs are allowed on the property where the event is being held. Street Banner signs require approval through a permit and may not exceed a sign area of 3’ x 8’ in horizontal format.

Interim Banner signs are allowed for 90 days when permanent signage has not yet been erected. These banners also require approval through a permit and sign area is determined by the area of the approved permanent sign.

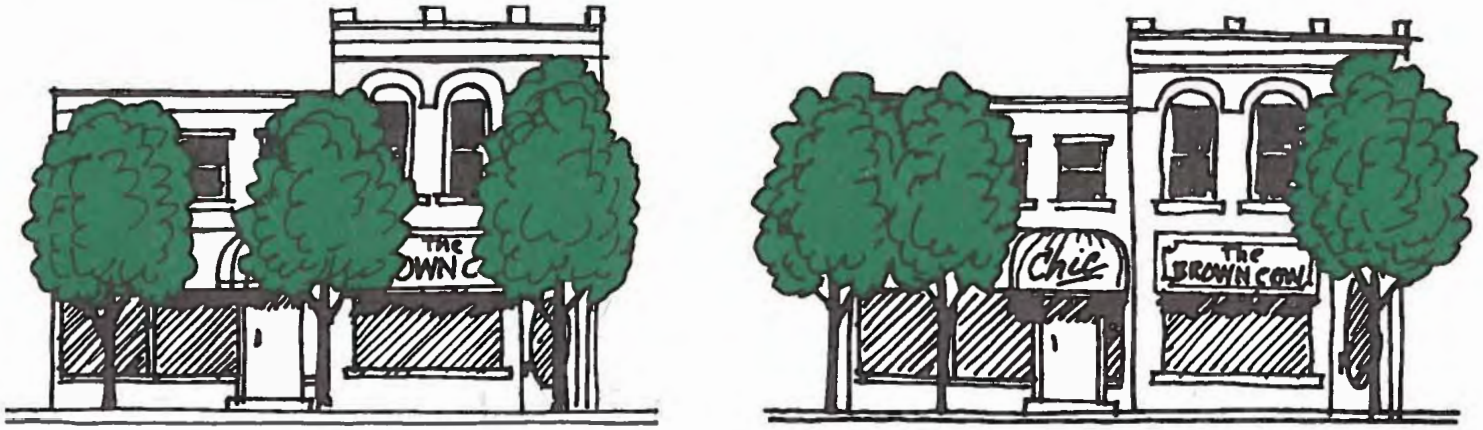
Please also see Unified Development Ordinance:

- 5.39(M) & 5.39(R)



PLANT IN THE RIGHT PLACE

To prevent tree/sign conflicts, half of the problem can be solved through better sign size and placement, but half of the responsibility rests with those who plant and care for street and mall trees. Here are some suggestions.



Rather than following a rigid spacing plan, planting in coordination with signs, storefronts and other existing facilities can help to reduce opposition from business owners.

Source: Tree City USA Bulletin No. 11, National Arbor Day Foundation, 2001.

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TREE SIGN CONFLICT PREVENTION

PRUNE TO AID VISIBILITY*

Whether it is a limb obstructing a stop sign or a shade tree in front of a store, trees in any community require annual inspections and regular pruning to prevent tree/sign conflicts.

"Crown lifting" is a technique used by arborists to remove a tree's lowest limbs over several years. This is done gradually so that no more than 1/3 of the living crown is removed during any single pruning. Eventually the lowest part of the crown is 8-14 feet above the sidewalk, well out of the way of street-level signs, vehicles and vandals.

WRONG: *The unpruned tree blocks the sign.*

WRONG: *The crown is lifted too high, which results in a weak tree. Generally the crown should be at least 2/3 the height of the tree, the trunk only 1/3.*

RIGHT: *The tree is pruned above the sign, but retains the 2/3, 1/3 ratio. Proper pruning techniques are used–never topping!*

Source: Tree City USA Bulletin No. 11, National Arbor Day Foundation, 2001.

*The City of Carmel is responsible for pruning trees that are located in the City's right-of-way (typically the area between the street and the sidewalk). A homeowner or homeowner's association would be responsible for pruning any trees on private property.

For More Information, Contact:
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