

**City of Westminster
Planning Department
Applicant's Guide For:**

SIGN REVIEW

PURPOSE

Sign review is intended to ensure that all applicable permanent signs erected or displayed within the City comply with the City's Sign Ordinance, Chapter 15 of the Westminster Municipal Code (WMC), and are designed in such a fashion that signs will harmoniously blend with the surrounding structures and environment. All signs, temporary or permanent, which are being moved, altered, modified, hung or constructed are required to undergo review by the Planning Department. Signs must also adhere to the Design Standards, Chapter 17.67 of the W.M.C.

Signs are intended to identify businesses, and, therefore, the following general guidelines have been recommended:

1. The sign should use a brief message that identifies the business and use a simple text style that is easy to read. **Signs that "advertise" are not permitted i.e. phone numbers, menu lists or price lists, list of services, etc.**
2. Signs should be directed towards motorists and pedestrians, who are generally six feet high in front of the business. Pedestrian scale signs and monument signs that increase "windshield appeal" are the recommended sign types.
3. Electrical and construction components of the sign must be hidden within the sign or building wall. No exposed electrical raceways are allowed.

PROCESS

Building signs are signs that are affixed to a building storefront. They can include channel letters, foam letters, can or box signs, or wood carved signs, and canopy signs depending upon the district in which the business is located. All sign plans must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to issuance of a building permit. If permits have not been issued, the signs may be subject to code enforcement action or fines and removal of non-permitted signs. The requirements for sign submittal packages are located at the end of this handout. The plans shall be drawn, signed and stamped by a sign contractor or electrician if electricity is provided.

The proposed sign package will be checked for compliance with the Sign Ordinance and the shopping center's master sign program if the City has approved one. Therefore, it is recommended that the sign contractor request information regarding the Sign Ordinance and existing master sign programs. If a master sign program does not exist, the proposed sign must be consistent with the sign style and colors of adjacent legally constructed signs. Photographs may be required. In some cases, depending on the sign size or the building size, Planning Commission review may be necessary.

In general, building sign face area is computed by means of the smallest geometrical shape that encompasses the limits of the writing, emblem, logo or display of the sign. A building

sign shall be no larger than 40 square feet or 15% of the tenant unit building face frontage square footage, upon which the sign must be placed, whichever is greater.

Freestanding signs are signs that are independent of the main building and are usually placed along street frontages. These signs are only allowed for properties that meet the criteria listed in the Sign Ordinance. Certain smaller properties may not be permitted to have freestanding signs. In general, along street frontages, the recommended sign type is a monument sign for businesses in commercial and industrial areas. Pylon signs may be appropriate where permitted and must have design details that are consistent with the architecture of the buildings and within the standards set forth in the City's Sign Ordinance. See Tables B and C of WMC 15.40 for required setbacks, areas and height limitations.

REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR SIGN PROPOSAL PACKAGES:

REQUIRED INFORMATION:

Sign proposals need to include two (2) sets of plans with the following:

1. **Site plan** showing property dimension, landscape areas, parking lots, building etc. and;
2. **Elevation drawings** with:
 - a. Dimensions and areas of all signs;
 - b. Dimensions and areas of building walls on which signs are located;
 - c. Heights of all signs;
 - d. Means of lighting;
 - e. Message that will appear on each sign (if known);
 - f. Description of materials and colors for letters and background; and
 - g. A scaled drawing of each sign showing type-face and design detail

Cross-sections:

- a. Method of attachment;
- b. Electrical equipment location;

Development standards from the Westminster City Code (WMC) 15.00 apply. Design standards from WMC 17.67 may apply. Where a direct conflict may exist between the code sections, the more restrictive section of code shall apply.