

Chapter 130 - SIGNS

Sec. 130-1. - Declarations.

The city, formed in 1936, has a unique heritage and was created as a specially planned community based upon the work of the renowned city planner, Harland Bartholomew. The city is predominately a residential community, small portions of which have been zoned for commercial and industrial use. The protection and preservation of the rights and values of privacy, aesthetics, and safety are of great importance to the residents of the city and substantially contribute to the special ambiance, quality of life, and general welfare of the community. The property values in the city and the general welfare of its residents are enhanced by the maintenance of the highest standards of privacy, aesthetics, and safety for the benefit of all its residents; therefore:

- (1) It is hereby declared that the proliferation of an unlimited number of signs in private, residential, commercial, industrial, and public areas of the city would create ugliness, visual blight and clutter, tarnish the natural beauty of the landscape as well as the residential and commercial architecture, impair property values, substantially impinge upon the privacy and special ambience of the community, and may cause safety and traffic hazards to motorists, pedestrians, and children.
- (2) It is hereby declared that the city wishes to allow speech and expression through the medium of signs so long as the city is protected against the proliferation of an unlimited number of signs and unnecessarily large signs that would substantially impinge upon the city's interests in privacy, aesthetics, safety and adversely impact the value of property owned by its residents.
- (3) It is hereby declared that the time, place, and manner of the regulation of signs described in this chapter are necessary to protect and preserve the city's aforesaid interests in privacy, aesthetics, safety, and property values.

(Code 1969, § 35-1; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-2. - Purpose and intent.

- (a) The purpose of this chapter is to provide reasonable regulations for the erection and display of signs. These regulations are intended to promote the public health, safety and general welfare through a comprehensive set of reasonable standards and requirements which preserve the appearance of the city.

- (b) These regulations are not intended to prohibit the erection or display of a sign with a religious or political message, or any sign allowed or required by state or federal law; provided that any such sign conforms to the size requirements and other reasonable requirements of this chapter.

(Code 1969, § 35-2; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-3. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section; words and phrases which are not defined shall be given their usual meaning except where the context clearly indicates a different or specific meaning:

Alter means a physical change in a sign or sign supports, or an addition to a sign or sign supports. The term "alter" includes renovation, modification, rehabilitation or restoration, but does not include changing the copy on an institutional bulletin board sign, or other changeable copy sign permitted by this chapter.

Billboard means a sign that identifies or communicates a commercial or noncommercial message related to an activity conducted, a service rendered, or a commodity sold at a location other than where the sign is located.

Bulletin board sign, institutional, means a wall sign or freestanding sign which identifies a place of worship or school and which contains the name of the institution and manually changeable copy information such as the names of individuals connected with the institution, general announcements of events or activities occurring at the institution, or similar messages.

Changeable copy sign means a sign on which message copy is changed manually, through the utilization of attachable letters, numbers, symbols and other similar characters of changeable pictorial panels.

Commercial message means any sign wording, logo or other representation that directly or indirectly names, advertises or calls attention to a business, product, service or other commercial activity (see section 130-5).

Driveway sign means a sign located near a driveway that contains the address of the premises or information such as "enter," "exit only," "no construction traffic," "no deliveries," or any similar information.

Erect means to build, construct, install, attach, hang, place, inscribe, suspend or affix, and shall include the painting of wall signs.

Flag means any fabric or bunting containing distinctive colors, patterns or symbols, including flags used as a symbol of a government or an institution, but not including a commercial message.

Freestanding sign means any sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in, the ground and that are independent from any building or other structure.

Gross sign area. See *Sign area, gross.*

Illuminated sign means any sign that is internally or externally illuminated.

Institutional bulletin board sign. See *Bulletin board sign, institutional.*

Nonconforming sign means any sign that was lawfully erected but no longer conforms to the requirements of this chapter.

Off-premises sign means any sign except a billboard as defined herein, which advertises or identifies a property, business or address other than the property, business or address where the sign is displayed.

Pole sign means a freestanding sign in excess of six feet in height elevated aboveground level by one or more narrow structures or supports that are anchored in the ground and that is independent from any building or other structure, but not including a billboard.

Political or religious sign means a sign containing a political, religious or other similar noncommercial message.

Portable sign means any sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure, which is designed to be transported, including, but not limited to, signs designed to be transported by means of wheels, signs converted to A-frames or T-frames, menu and sandwich board signs, and hot air balloons used as signs.

Real estate sign means any sign pertaining to the sale, lease or rental of real estate.

Roof sign means any sign erected and constructed wholly on and over the roof of a building, supported by the roof structure, and extending vertically above the highest portion of the roof.

Sign means any device, fixture, placard or structure that uses any color, form, graphic illumination, symbol or writing to advertise, announce the purpose of, or identify the purpose of a person or entity, or to communicate information of any kind to the public, but not including a church steeple.

Sign area, gross, means the entire area within a single continuous perimeter composed of parallelograms, triangles, circles, ellipses or combinations thereof, enclosing the extreme limits of the sign, but not including structural supports which are not an integral part of the sign; except that in the case of an individual letter sign erected on a wall only two-thirds of the entire area of the enclosing parallelograms, triangles, circles, ellipses or combinations thereof, shall be counted as the gross area of the sign. Where a sign has two or more faces, the gross area of all such faces shall be included in determining the total gross area of the sign.

Sign face means the area or display surface used for the message.

Sign height means, for all signs, the vertical distance measured from the elevation of the centerline of the adjacent right-of-way at the point closest to the sign to the highest point of the sign.

Sign permit means a document certifying that the plans for the proposed sign comply with all applicable city ordinances and requirements.

Snipe sign means a temporary sign or poster affixed to a utility pole, tree, fence or similar object not designed to support a sign.

Temporary sign means a sign which is not permanently installed or affixed to any sign, structure, building or lot.

Unkempt or unsightly sign means a sign that is clearly in disrepair, is missing part of its copy, has letters or other copy that are broken, missing or so faded that they are difficult to read from the street, is not securely affixed to either the ground or some other supporting structure, contains an illegible message, contains rust or peeling or flaking paint, or has damage to its face which is clearly visible from the street.

Wall sign means any sign attached parallel to, and within 14 inches of, a wall, painted on the wall surface, or erected and confined within the limits of an outside wall of any building or structure, which is supported by such wall or building, and which displays only one sign face.

Window sign means any sign, pictures, symbol or combination thereof, designed to communicate information about an activity, business, commodity, event, sale or service, that is placed immediately inside a window or upon the window panes or glass and is visible from the exterior of the window.

(Code 1969, § 35-3; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996; Ord. No. 2025, §§ 1, 2, 4, 8-15-2011)

Sec. 130-4. - Applicability.

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to signs in both residential and nonresidential districts of the city, unless a sign is specifically exempted by section 130-6. Every sign shall comply with all other applicable ordinances of the city. In case of a conflict between the provisions of this chapter and other applicable provisions, the more restrictive shall govern.

(Code 1969, § 35-4; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-5. - Permitted signs.

- (a) The following signs are permitted in all zoning districts, subject to all of the limitations and provisions stated in this chapter:
- (1) Subdivision identification signs which are permanent signs designating a subdivision or neighborhood. Such signs shall be limited to six square feet per sign face with a maximum of two sign faces.
 - (2) A political, religious or other similar noncommercial message sign; provided, however, that there shall be only one such sign on any lot. Such sign may contain a political or religious message but may not carry any commercial message. Such sign shall have a maximum sign area of four square feet per sign face and a maximum of two sign faces. No permit shall be required for such a sign, provided that the sign is erected by the owner or with the owner's permission. Election signs are regulated in subsection (a)(5) of this section.
 - (3) A real estate sign that is referenced in RSMo 67.317. Such sign may advertise the property for sale, lease or rent, but is limited to four square feet per sign face and a maximum of two sign faces.
 - (4) Institutional signs for institutional uses such as schools, country clubs, monasteries, convents and places of worship. Such institutions shall be allowed one permanent wall sign and one permanent freestanding sign. In addition, a place of worship having a

significant accessory use or uses such as a day care facility may have one additional freestanding sign. No permanent sign shall contain a sign face with an area exceeding 16 square feet in size and no freestanding sign shall have more than two faces. One of the permanent signs may be a bulletin board sign with changeable copy. In addition, such institutions shall be permitted one temporary sign which may be a single-faced or double-faced sign although no single sign face shall exceed four square feet and the total gross area of any such sign shall not exceed eight square feet. Display of such sign shall be limited to a period of 45 days.

- (5) Election signs which are temporary signs linked to or supporting a particular candidate or a particular ballot question scheduled to appear on a ballot during a particular election may be erected by the property owner or with his permission but must be removed ten days after the election to which the signs pertain. Each lot or parcel of land in the city shall be permitted one sign per individual candidate and/or issue/proposition. Each sign may be single-faced or double-faced but no single sign face shall exceed four square feet. No such sign shall be more than three feet in height or erected within ten feet of the edge of pavement.
- (6) Commercial message signs, but only in nonresidential zoning districts. Such signs shall be subject to the requirements of section XVIII of the city's zoning ordinance, when enacted, concerning commercial signs and any provisions of this chapter which may also be applicable.

(b) A sign permit is required in connection with signs described in subsections (a)(1), (4) and (6) of this section.

(Code 1969, § 35-5; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996; Ord. No. 1867, § 1, 12-13-2004)

Sec. 130-6. - Exempt signs.

With the exception of section 130-10 concerning design, construction, maintenance, and inspection, the provisions and regulations of this chapter shall not apply to the following signs:

- (1) Governmental and official signs including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Public notices and official notices posted or authorized by government officials in the performance of their duties.
 - b. Signs for the control or direction of traffic and other appropriate public purposes.
- (2) "No parking" and "no trespassing" signs that are no larger than one square foot in gross sign area and have a sign height of two feet or less.

- (3) Driveway signs, including the following:
 - a. Signs at driveway entrances provided that such signs do not exceed one square foot in gross sign area and have a sign height of two feet or less.
 - b. Residential address number located on a sign not larger than one square foot in gross sign area. If such information is contained on a freestanding sign, such sign shall be limited to a height of three feet.

(Code 1969, § 35-6; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-7. - Prohibited signs.

- (a) The following types of signs are specifically prohibited in the city:
 - (1) Signs visible from a public right-of-way that imitate, blend, or conflict with, or that may be confused with, traffic signals and signs. Such signs shall include, but not be limited to, signs that are imitations of "stop," "go," "caution," "danger," or "warning."
 - (2) Signs that are of a size, location, movement or illumination as may be confused with or construed as a traffic control device or which might obstruct from view any traffic or street sign or signal.
 - (3) Signs on public land, except those erected at the direction of or with the permission of an appropriate public authority.
 - (4) Strips or strings of lights used to call attention to a use or occupancy by outlining property lines, roof lines, doors, windows, wall edges, or other architectural features of a building site. Exempted from this provision are holiday lighting displayed from November 1 through January 15.
 - (5) Moving signs, including those of which all or any part of the sign moves or appears to move. This prohibition against moving signs shall extend to devices including strings of lightbulbs and rotating signs, whether part of any sign or maintained as an independent feature.
 - (6) Commercial message signs in residential zoning districts. The only exceptions are for real estate signs described in section 130-5(3) and a sign that is used in connection with a preexisting nonconforming use as defined by the city's zoning ordinance. A sign of that type shall be subject to section XVIII of the zoning ordinance, when enacted, so long as the nonconforming use continues.
 - (7) Snipe signs as defined in section 130-3.
 - (8) Unkempt or unsightly signs as defined in section 130-3.

- (9) Roof signs as defined in section 130-3.
 - (10) Signs which project more than 14 inches from the face of the building except covered walkway signs allowed by section XVIII of the zoning ordinance, when enacted.
 - (11) Any sign structure which no longer supports a sign. Exempted from this section is a sign structure which is temporarily void of a sign due to a permitted alteration or repair. A sign permit or an application for a sign permit for this alteration or repair must be on file with the city and said alteration or repair must be completed within one month of the issuance of the approved sign permit.
 - (12) Automated or digital changeable copy signs.
 - (13) Permanent or temporary window signs above the ceiling of the second floor including lettering painted or applied to glass.
 - (14) Portable signs as defined in section 130-3.
 - (15) Inflatable signs and tethered balloons.
 - (16) Signs extending over a roadway.
 - (17) Off-premises signs as defined in section 130-3.
 - (18) Pole signs as defined in section 130-3.
 - (19) Billboards in residentially zoned areas.
- (b) Any sign not permitted by section 130-5 or exempted by section 130-6 is prohibited.
(Code 1969, § 35-7; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996; Ord. No. 2025, §§ 3, 5, 8-15-2011)

Sec. 130-8. - Illuminated signs.

The following regulations shall apply to illumination of signs:

- (1) In residentially zoned areas, no illuminated signs shall be permitted except:
 - a. Permanent signs for places of worship, schools or government owned and operated buildings which shall not be internally illuminated or backlit.
 - b. Signs associated with a preexisting nonconforming use shall be subject to the regulations in subsection (2) of this section.
 - c. Subdivision identification signs.
- (2) Signs in nonresidentially zoned areas and signs associated with a preexisting nonconforming use shall be subject to the following requirements:
 - a.

No signs concerning commercial subjects shall be illuminated except that a business that provides services to customers may illuminate those signs concerning the provided service at the location where the service is provided and during the hours the business is open to provide such services.

- b. The light from any illuminated sign shall be shaded, shielded and/or directed away from the residents or occupants of surrounding areas. The intensity of such light shall not exceed one-half footcandle at the property line of any adjoining residentially zoned property.
- c. No sign shall have blinking, flashing, or fluttering lights or other illuminating device of variable light intensity, brightness, or color.
- d. No colored lights shall be used at any location.
- e. Neither direct nor reflected light from primary light sources shall create a hazard to operators of motor vehicles on public thoroughfares.
- f. No exposed reflective-type bulb or incandescent lamp which exceeds 40 watts shall be used on the exterior surface of any sign in such manner as to expose the face of the bulb, light or lamp to any public street or adjacent property.

(Code 1969, § 35-8; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996; Ord. No. 1676, § 1, 12-15-1997)

Sec. 130-9. - Permits required.

No sign permitted under section 130-5, which one is designated as required to have a sign permit, shall be erected, constructed, painted or placed upon any building or premises within the city until a permit therefor has been issued by the city clerk.

- (1) No sign permit shall be issued until after an application therefor has been filed with the city clerk accompanied by duplicate scale or dimensional drawings showing the plans and specifications, dimensions, the material of which the sign is to be constructed, the details of construction thereof, including loads, stresses and anchorage, the estimated cost thereof, and in the case of freestanding signs, the proposed location with reference to street lines and the walls of adjacent buildings, if any. When a proposed sign is to be attached to a building or other independent structure, the drawings shall show the position of the sign on the supporting structure, the method of attachment to such structure and the character of the structural member to which such attachment is made.

(2)

- All applications for permits to erect signs shall be filed by the owner or lessee of the premises, or shall be accompanied by written consent of the owner or lessee, of the property upon which such sign is to be erected.
- (3) Sign permit applications shall be approved by the city's planning consultant prior to issuance of the permit by the city clerk. If a building permit is required, the sign permit application shall also be approved by the building commissioner or his designee.
- (4) If the city clerk fails to issue a permit after 90 days of the receipt of a completed application, the applicant may appeal to the board of zoning adjustment for issuance of the necessary permit. The board of zoning adjustment shall consider such application and apply the regulations set out herein.
- (5) The applicant must secure a building permit and pay a sign fee of \$100.00 prior to erecting any sign requiring a sign permit. This section does not apply to temporary signs as defined under section 130-3.

(Code 1969, § 35-9; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996; Ord. No. 1982, § 1, 10-26-2009)

Sec. 130-10. - Design, construction, maintenance and inspection.

All signs shall comply with the following general requirements for design, construction, maintenance and inspection:

- (1) *Sign faces.* When a sign is allowed two sign faces, the sign faces shall be parallel to one another and not more than 14 inches apart unless specifically authorized to deviate from this requirement by an applicable portion of this chapter.
- (2) *Projections.* No sign shall project beyond a property line or into a public right-of-way, except traffic control signs as authorized by ordinance.
- (3) *Compliance with building codes.* Erection, construction, installation or placement of any sign requiring a sign permit shall comply with all applicable building codes. The building commissioner may deny approval of the erection, construction, installation or placement of any sign which does not meet all minimum standards as set forth in the building codes of the city.
- (4) *Building permits for freestanding signs.* A building permit shall be required for all freestanding signs which are permitted by other ordinances or Code sections.
- (5) *Inspection of wall signs.* All wall signs shall be inspected by the city prior to being installed on a wall to ensure compliance with this chapter.

- (6) *All signs to be in good repair.* All signs and related structures shall be maintained in good repair, free of rust, peeling, flaking, fading, broken or cracked surfaces, and broken or missing letters.
- (7) *Maintenance; notice to owner.* All signs and related structures shall be maintained in a safe, clean and attractive condition. Whenever the building commissioner, the building inspector or their designees determines that a sign has become structurally unsafe or endangers life or property or is not being maintained in good repair, a notice shall be sent to the owner or person in charge of the sign that the sign be made safe, repaired or removed. The owner or person in charge of the sign shall have ten days from receipt of such notice in which to comply.

(Code 1969, § 35-10; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-11. - Compliance requirements.

Signs are required to be in compliance with this chapter as follows:

- (1) No new sign may be constructed or erected after the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived, unless the sign conforms to all the provisions of this chapter and any required sign permit that has been issued by the city clerk. Nothing in this section shall relieve the owner or user of a nonconforming sign from the provisions of this chapter regarding safety, maintenance, and repair of signs specified in section 130-10.
- (2) Any existing sign that is destroyed, deteriorated or damaged to the extent of 50 percent or more of its replacement cost, exclusive of the foundation, after the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived, shall not be rebuilt, repaired or replaced unless in conformity with the provisions of this chapter. Repair of such sign shall not affect application of the provisions of this section.
- (3) Any sign that was erected without a permit prior to June 17, 1996, the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived, shall be removed or brought into conformance with this chapter within six months of such effective date, except that signs used in connection with a preexisting nonconforming use shall be subject to subsection (4) of this section.
- (4)

All existing signs erected with a permit and signs used in connection with a preexisting nonconforming use shall be brought into compliance within five years of June 17, 1996, the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived, except signs with variances granted prior to such date which shall be regulated by subsection (5) of this section.

- (5) Signs which received a variance from the city council prior to June 17, 1996, the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived, shall be required to comply with the size requirements of this chapter or other applicable size requirement which is specified in section XVIII of the city's zoning ordinance, when enacted, within eight years of the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived.

(Code 1969, § 35-11; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-12. - Miscellaneous requirements.

- (a) *Flags.* Flags, as defined in this chapter, shall be permitted in any zoning district without a permit. Each lot or parcel of land in the city shall be limited to the display of not more than four flags. Parcels of land in excess of five acres in size, however, may display additional flags provided that there are not more than four flags displayed per five acres of land area. No flag shall exceed 24 square feet in size. Within five days prior to and three days following a national holiday such as Independence Day, Memorial Day or Veteran's Day, there shall be no limitation on the number of U.S. flags displayed on any parcel of land within the city. Flagpoles shall not exceed 25 feet in height in residential districts. In other districts they shall be subject to the maximum structure height limitations.
- (b) *Sign setbacks.* All permanent signs shall be set back from property lines according to the regulations specified in this chapter or as otherwise required by any other applicable city ordinance. Temporary signs shall be set back at least five feet from the edge of pavement of any road and shall be located outside of the right-of-way of any city, state or county road.
- (c) *Sign height.* No permitted freestanding sign shall exceed six feet in height unless specifically authorized by an applicable section of this chapter, or specifically authorized by section XVIII of the zoning ordinance, when enacted.

(Code 1969, § 25-12; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-13. - Enforcement and sign removal.

- (a)

Inspection of signs. All signs may be inspected by the building commissioner, building inspector or someone appointed by them to determine if the sign is insecure, in danger of falling, or otherwise unsafe. Signs also may be inspected to ensure compliance with all provisions of this chapter.

- (b) *Notice to remove unsafe sign.* When any sign becomes insecure, in danger of falling, or otherwise unsafe, or if any sign exists or is installed or maintained in violation of the provisions of this chapter with respect to construction or safety, the owner, person or firm maintaining such sign shall correct the deficiencies or violation or remove the sign within ten days after receiving notice from the city clerk; provided, however, that if such sign constitutes an immediate danger to the public health, safety or welfare, the building commissioner shall order immediate correction or removal of such sign.
- (c) *Removal of nonconforming signs.* Any sign which is not erected, constructed, or maintained in accordance with the provisions of this chapter shall be removed by the owner within 15 days of notice by the city. If the owner fails to act after 15 days' notice to the owner of the property, such sign may be removed by the city and the cost thereof charged to the owner of, or person maintaining, such sign.

(Code 1969, § 35-13; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-14. - Variances.

- (a) Where there are practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship in carrying out the strict letter of the provisions of this chapter, the zoning board of adjustment may vary or modify the application of specific regulations for any permitted form of signage so that the spirit of this chapter shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done. A variance from this chapter may be granted for any permitted form of signage only where it is found that because of the limitations on character, size, number, or dimensions of signs, or the regulations controlling the erection or installation of a sign, the applicant would be subject to practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship. Unnecessary hardship is not considered the loss of possible advantage, economic loss or gain, or mere inconvenience to the applicant.
- (b) The procedures and criteria for granting a variance from the regulations in this chapter shall be as set out in section IX of the zoning ordinance.

(Code 1969, § 35-14; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-15. - Violations.

The actual costs for correction of violations incurred by the city under the provisions of this chapter shall become a lien upon the property from which the same were removed. The amount of such lien shall be added to the tax roll and collected as unpaid taxes.

(Code 1969, § 35-15; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)

Sec. 130-16. - Severability of parts of this chapter.

The phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and sections of this chapter are severable and if any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, or section of this chapter shall be declared unconstitutional or otherwise unlawful by the valid judgment, decree, or injunction order of a court of competent jurisdiction, such ruling shall not affect any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and sections of this chapter. In the event that, contrary to the policies, interests, and values of the city, a court of competent jurisdiction issues a judgment, decree, or injunction order that this chapter, or any part thereof, is unconstitutional or otherwise unlawful because of any omission or prohibition in this chapter, then all provisions of this chapter not specifically declared to be unconstitutional or otherwise unlawful shall remain in full force and effect and all signs not already specifically regulated in section 130-5 shall be permitted but shall not be greater than four square feet. In the event that a judgment, decree, or injunction order declaring all or a portion of this chapter to be unconstitutional or otherwise unlawful is reversed or vacated by a court of competent jurisdiction, the provisions contained in this chapter shall remain in full force and effect.

(Code 1969, § 35-16; Ord. No. 1634, § 1, 6-17-1996)