Sign Design & Reed/Gilbert: A Consultant’s Perspective

PAW – Sign Code Training - June 23, 2017  Bob Bengford  AICP, MAKERS
Sign Code Update: Finding the Sweet Spot between Flexibility & Clutter Management
City of Lacey

Sign Ordinance Audit Review + Update

Adopted February 12, 2015
Purpose

- Improvement of storefront and business identity and recognition.
- Sign compatibility with various zoning districts
Issue: Business visibility along major corridors
Issue: Minimize clutter
Issue: Electronic messaging signage
Issue: A-Frame & Feather Signs
Project Theme

- Integrating greater sign code flexibility while strengthening sign design provisions
Solutions
Allow MORE freestanding signs

3. **Permitted number of signs.** One sign is permitted per frontage, per property. Additional freestanding signs shall be permitted per Table 16.75.080(A)(3) below.

Table 16.75.080(A)(3). For properties with more than 500 feet of frontage, additional freestanding signs are permitted per the separation standards below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicable Speed Limit</th>
<th>Minimum Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 35 mph</td>
<td>150'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-45 mph</td>
<td>200'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Allow LARGER freestanding signs

Large shopping centers (>30 acres & 350,000sf floor area) can have a 30’ tall freestanding sign with 300sf
## PROPOSED CODE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total ROW Frontage of Parcel (on each streets)</th>
<th>Allowable Sign Area (white/very light background)</th>
<th>Allowable Sign Area (shaded or dark background)</th>
<th>Maximum Height (white/very light background)</th>
<th>Maximum Height (shaded or dark background)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 200 Feet</td>
<td>24 sq. ft.</td>
<td>40 sq. ft.</td>
<td>6 feet</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - 399 Feet</td>
<td>36 sq. ft.</td>
<td>54 sq. ft.</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 - 599 Feet</td>
<td>50 sq. ft.</td>
<td>70 sq. ft.</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 - 799 Feet</td>
<td>60 sq. ft.</td>
<td>80 sq. ft.</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 - 999 Feet</td>
<td>66 sq. ft.</td>
<td>88 sq. ft.</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
<td>12 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 Feet and &gt;</td>
<td>72 sq. ft.</td>
<td>96 sq. ft.</td>
<td>9 feet</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supplemental Freestanding sign provisions:

a. Signs that employ shaded, opaque or dark background and light colored lettering are allowed larger sign areas, as they are found to be less visually intrusive than signs incorporating white or very light-colored background. See Figure 16.75.080(A)(6)(a) below for examples.[b32]

![Signs](image)

Figure 16.75.080(A)(6)(a). The black, dark, and shaded signs above qualify for the extra sign area and height specified in the shaded columns of Table 16.75.080(A)(6). The sign on the right with the white background is allowed (but doesn't qualify for the “bonus” sign area and height) and subject to the sign area/height in the unshaded columns above in Table 16.75.080(A)(6).
Content Neutrality Violation???

Figure 16.75.080(A)(6)(a). The black, dark, and shaded signs above qualify for the extra sign area and height specified in the shaded columns of Table 16.75.080(A)(6). The sign on the right with the white background is allowed (but doesn’t qualify for the “bonus” sign area and height) and subject to the sign area/height in the unshaded columns above in Table 16.75.080(A)(6).
c. Center names for multi-tenant commercial centers are exempt from allowable sign area calculations specified above. Freestanding signs incorporating center names are allowed 15 percent greater sign height than specified above.
Incentives for including Center Names

Content Neutrality Violation???
Issue: Minimize clutter

Proposed Solution:
Use the “Street Graphics” approach for free-standing signs that reduces clutter and improves legibility by limiting the total amount of information on the sign.
Keeping It Simple

- Each word is one “item” of information
- Each graphic is one “item” of information
- Each grouping of numbers is one “item” of information

- Center names are exempt
32 total “items”  

10 total “items”  

17 total “items”
Proposed Approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed Limit</th>
<th>Up to 24sf</th>
<th>24-35.9sf</th>
<th>36-49.9sf</th>
<th>50-80sf</th>
<th>80sf+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 mph</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 mph</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 mph</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 mph</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeway</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Street graphics approach
Street graphics approach
Street graphics approach

Apple Tree Center

CHRISTENSEN'S CAMERA SHOP
380-555-2385

The Olde Village Host

SKOAL

ANTIQUE BAZAAR
PIZZA

Dine In
Take Out

APEX TAX SERVICE
Notary

Total Items of Information

SPEED LIMIT
30
Street graphics approach

Apple Tree Center

CHRISTENSEN'S CAMERA SHOP

The Village Host

ANTIQUE BAZAAR PIZZA

APEX TAX SERVICE

Total Items of Information

15

SPEED LIMIT 40

D
Content Neutrality Violation???
Electronic messaging signage

Proposed Solutions:
1. Allow for digital signage to be integrated into freestanding signs provided conditions are included to limit clutter and negative visual impacts.
2. Allow for digital directories to provide greater sign display opportunities for individual businesses
Allow digital signage integration

Digital directory up to 50%
Allow digital signage integration

Up to 1/3 of sign for changing message signage (up to 50% for single tenant)
Allow digital signage integration

Up to 2/3 of sign for total digital signage
Content Neutrality Violation???
Sandwich Board Signs

Proposal
Major Sign Code Issues

Feather Signs

Feather signs – 1 per 100lf:
Content Neutrality Violation???
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