

Summary of Recommended Zoning Changes:

Below is a summary of the recommended Zoning By-Law changes to Section 6.2 (the Sign By-Law). The entire existing Zoning By-Law can be found on the Reading website on the Town Clerk Department webpage under Town By-Laws.

<p>Proposed Change:</p> <p>Make the whole sign structure the sign, and increase the maximum allowable. Rewrite the Sign definition on P. 5 section 2.2.29 so that it reads, <i>“Any word or combination of number, emblem, picture, design, trademark or other device designed to inform persons of the activities, services or products sold on the premises on which the sign is located, including the support structure of freestanding signs.”</i></p> <p>Add: <i>A “Sign” shall not include national or state flags or other insignia of governmental jurisdictions, temporary holiday decorations, historical date markers or plaques, or artwork that contains no commercial messages.</i></p>
<p>To address the question of when is an awning a sign, and who determines it: Add to Site Plan Review, section 4.3.3.5.1 a new subsection, f. sign plan or overall signage plan, to read “Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials, and scale of buildings <i>and signs</i> in the vicinity...” This way, CPDC could determine if the entire awning comprises the sign, provided our revised sign definition supports this. This also clarifies that CPDC would have review authority over signs outside Business-B zoning district through Site Plan Review.</p>
<p>to 4.3.3.5.1</p> <p>Propose adding the word signage to Site Plan Review section (words in bold to be added) so that the CPDC will review signage during site plan review.</p> <p>a. Site layout, which shall contain the boundaries of the lot(s) in the proposed development, proposed structures, drives, parking, fences, walls, walks, outdoor lighting, signage, loading facilities, and areas for snow storage after plowing. The first sheet in this plan shall be a locus plan, at a scale acceptable to the CPDC, showing the entire project and its relation to existing areas, buildings and roads for a distance of one thousand (1,000) feet from the project boundaries or such other distance as may be approved or required by the staff.</p>

<p>to 4.3.3.6</p> <p>f. Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials, signage, and scale of buildings in the vicinity, as viewed from public ways and places;</p>
<p>Add free-standing sign definition (6.2.1.3.g).</p> <p>Definition for Free-Standing Sign: Any and every free-standing sign erected on or affixed to the land and includes any and every sign that is not attached to a building.</p>
<p>Add monument sign definition (6.2.1.3.k).</p> <p>Monument signs are free-standing signs with a lower height configuration permanently affixed to the ground at its base and not mounted on a pole.</p>
<p>Add projecting/blade sign definition (Sec. 6.2.1.3.n.).</p> <p>Projecting/blade sign: A sign which is affixed to a building or other structure which extends beyond the surface to which it is affixed. Projecting signs shall be at least eight (8) feet from the ground and should project no more than four (4) feet from the structure.</p>
<p>Section 6.2.3.2.2: <u>Signs in Business-B Zoning Districts:</u></p> <p>In first paragraph remove, “No lot may contain a mixture of wall signs and projecting signs, but shall contain either all wall signs or all projecting signs.” And replace with <i>“a business occupying the ground floor is allowed two (2) signs if one sign is a wall sign and the second one is a projecting sign, awning sign or a wall sign located on a different building façade than the first wall sign.”</i></p> <p>Change the word “or” to “and” so that it reads, “One wall and one projecting sign per business occupying the ground floor and front wall of the building, except in cases where the provisions of Paragraph 6.2.3.2.m. are utilized, and</p>
<p>Sign area definition. Leave as is. Make max sign area the max sign.</p>
<p>Sign height definition. Change all semicolons to periods. Include diagram / illustration to make sign height easier to understand.</p>

<p>Removal of defunct signs (when a business is no longer in existence at that location). The issue is with enforcement. Solution: The new sign definition includes the supporting structure/frame so that it will all need to be removed after 30 days.</p>
<p>Delete “without opaque background or signboard” from Section 6.2.2.4.c. and replace with “<i>without background that blocks illumination or glow</i>”.</p> <p>Light shall only shine through the lettering or graphics for internally illuminated signs in the Bus-A, Industrial & PUD zoning districts.</p>
<p>Banners - Only allowed as temporary signs with sign permit, refer to Section 6.2.3.2.i. for more details.</p>
<p>Flags or emblems of religious, educational, or governmental organizations except when displayed in connection with commercial promotions are allowed. Flags shall not exceed twenty four (24) square feet in area or six (6) feet in length. Currently, only “OPEN” flags were allowed.</p>
<p>Add to end of Prohibited Signs: “<i>and any signs which use LCD, LED, or digital technology.</i>”</p>
<p>Add: <i>Changeable Copy Sign/Reader Board signs are not allowed in any zoning district except as a price display at gas stations.</i></p>
<p><u>Exempt signs:</u> f. Works of art which contain no commercial message add to the end, “<i>with prior Town Planner or CPDC written approval.</i>”</p>
<p>Remove the restriction allowing four inch lettering on <i>retractable</i> awnings. 4 inch lettering or less on all awnings or canopies shall not require a sign permit and not count towards the allowable sign area. Letters or graphics more than 4 inches shall require a sign permit and count towards the allowed sign area.</p>
<p>Window Signs: Include line drawing, illustrate in Des. Guidelines to make easier to understand. Change the maximum size of window sign lettering from 6 to 8 inches.</p> <p>In section (d) – add “In cases where there is a door or other architectural break in the building façade this buffer shall be reduced to seven (7) feet”.</p>

<p>For directional signs, Add “displaying text only, no logos or slogans”. Include visual example in sign design guidelines.</p>
<p>Add new subsection: Parking signs, such as “parking for ABC customers” are allowed, with text only, no logos, corporate colors, or advertising, up to two (2) per lot, up to 1.5 square feet in size.</p>
<p>Add New: “Grand opening events for a new business may display for 7 days, upon issuance of a sign permit, non-illuminated temporary banners, flags, balloons and / or streamers provided they are mounted in a way that does not pose a hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic and sight lines as determined by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. Only one grand opening sign permit per business until the property undergoes a change of use or change of ownership.”</p>
<p>Allow temporary banners four (4) times per year, rather than the current three (3) times per year.</p> <p>Replace three with four.</p>
<p>Add New: For temporary banners; 30 square feet maximum sign area for businesses that have a setback more than 50 feet from the primary street after “that no such sign shall exceed sixteen square feet in sign area”. (Currently, 16 sq. ft. is the max. sign area allowed in all zoning districts with no mention of building setbacks)</p>
<p>Include image and more details about master signage plans. Include visuals in design guidelines.</p>
<p>Sec. 6.2.3.2.1, delete “an opaque background or signboard”. Replace with, “<i>a background or signboard that blocks illumination or glow such that light is only visible through the letters and graphics.</i>”</p>
<p>Signs in Business A: Break second paragraph into separate paragraphs for each idea, especially since 2nd sentence is important, but buried and often overlooked.</p> <p>After illumination sentence, add “<i>Externally and internally illuminated signs shall be turned off at the earlier; 11:00 pm or the close of business.</i>”</p> <p>(Note that this would then apply to Business A, Business C and Industrial, but not Business B. This is because the first sentence in Business C and Industrial requires compliance with Business A requirements.)</p>

Remove, “provided that a lot may contain only wall or only projecting signs, and”

Add new section 6.2.1.3.h. Add definition for *Informational & Directional Signage:* A sign that has a purpose secondary to the use of the lot of which it is located, such as “no parking, private parking, enter, exit, one-way, Drive-thru teller”. Informational and directional signage shall not include any corporate logos, colors, or slogans and shall not exceed three (3) square feet per sign.

Current Zoning: Maximum square ft of Real Estate Sales signs are eight (8) sq. ft. for all zoning districts are allowed without a sign permit.

Change: In the Industrial Zoning District: Real estate signs are allowed 1 per business with a maximum sign area equal to 2 square feet per linear foot of the wall occupied by the establishment to which the sign relates without a sign permit.