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# CHAPTER 21.10: SIGNS<sup>1</sup>

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## 21.10.010 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare by establishing standards and criteria for the construction, installation, maintenance, and operation of signs in the Municipality of Anchorage, which are subject to the provisions of this section. It is the further purpose to provide for the removal of those signs that do not comply with these regulations. More specifically, this section is intended to:

- A. Enhance and protect the physical appearance of the municipality.
- B. To protect property values.
- C. Promote and maintain visually attractive, high value residential, retail, commercial and industrial districts.
- D. Promote the economic well being of the community by creating a favorable physical image
- E. Ensure that signs are located and designed to:
  - 1. Provide an effective means of way finding in the community.
  - 2. Afford the community an equal and fair way to advertise and promote its products and services.
  - 3. Reduce sign clutter and the distractions and confusion that may be contributing factors in traffic congestion and accidents, and maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment.
  - 4. Minimize the disruption of the scenic views which when maintained protect important community values.
  - 5. Respect the unique climatic conditions such as the amount of snow fall and the effect of sustained snow piles, the amount of daylight and the acute shadows regularly occurring on the landscape
  - 6. Afford businesses, individuals and institutions a reasonable opportunity to use signs as an effective means of communication
- F. Provide review procedures that assure that signs are consistent with the Municipality's objectives and within the Municipality's capacity to efficiently administer the regulations.
- G. Prohibit all signs not expressly permitted by this section.

## 21.10.020 APPLICATION OF THIS SECTION

- A. The regulations contained in this section shall apply to signs outside of the public right-of-way and on the property to which the standard or regulation refers, except when specifically stated otherwise. A sign may only be erected, established, painted,

1 created or maintained in conformance with the standards, criteria, procedures, and  
2 other applicable requirements of this section.

3 **B.** Unless otherwise stated in this section, all determinations, findings, and  
4 interpretations shall be made by the Director or other appropriate municipal officials  
5 called upon or designated by the Director.

6 **C.** The following signs and displays are exempted from this section:

7 1. Any sign displaying a public notice or warning required by a valid and  
8 applicable federal, state, or local law, ordinance, or regulation;

9 2. Flags of any nation, government, or non-commercial organization;

10 3. Any sign inside a building that is not attached to the window or door and is not  
11 legible from a distance of more than three feet beyond the lot on which the  
12 sign is located;

13 4. Any work of art that does not display a commercial message;

14 5. Any religious symbol that does not display a commercial message;

15 6. Any traffic control sign, such as "STOP" or "YIELD," located on private  
16 property that meets applicable governmental standards pertaining to such  
17 signs and does not display a commercial message.

18 7. Signs erected by state or local government agencies, or their contractors, to  
19 facilitate the construction, maintenance, or operation of transportation  
20 facilities.

21 8. Product dispensers and trash receptacles;

22 9. Holiday and community special event decorations that do not display a  
23 commercial message;

24 10. Mascots for educational institutions with primarily academic curricula;

25 11. Signs on athletic fields and scoreboards intended for on-premises viewing;

26 12. Construction signs of up to 32 square feet;

27 13. Temporary signs of six square feet or less in area, except as regulated  
28 elsewhere in this chapter.

29 **21.10.030 RELATIONSHIP OF THIS SECTION TO STATE LAW**

30 No provision of this section shall be interpreted as authorizing the erection or maintenance of  
31 any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the  
32 main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or the erection or  
33 maintenance of any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of  
34 the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway with the purpose of the  
35 message displayed being read from that travel way, in a manner that would conflict with the  
36 provisions of Alaska Statutes sections 19.25.075 – 19.25.180.

**21.10.040 COMPUTATIONS, RULES OF MEASUREMENT, AND DEFINITIONS**

The following regulations shall control the computation and measurement of sign area, sign height, building frontage, and public street frontage:

**A. Determining Sign Area or Dimension of Signs**

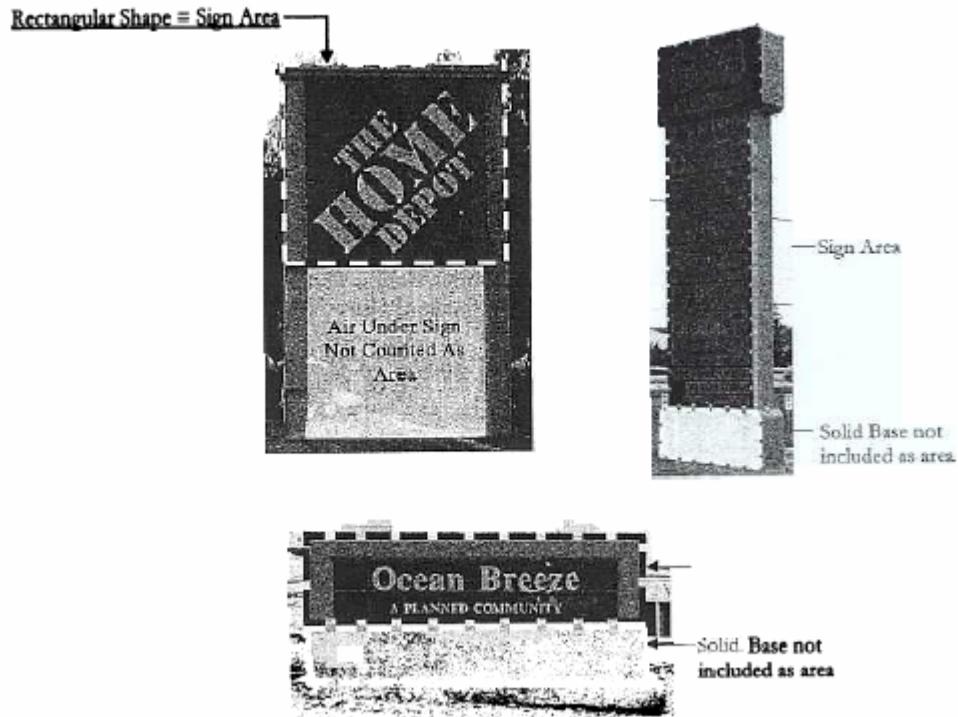
1. The sign area shall include the face of all the display area(s) of the sign. The sign area shall include the frame and structural support, as shown in Figure 1, unless such structural support is determined to be an architectural feature as defined in section 21.13.030. Architectural features that are either part of the building or part of a freestanding structure are not considered signs and are thus exempt from these regulations
2. For a sign that is framed, outlined, painted or otherwise prepared and intended to provide a background for a sign display, the area of the sign shall be the area of not more than three geometric shapes that encompasses the entire area of the sign including the background or frame.
3. For a sign comprised of individual letters, figures or elements on a wall or similar surface of a building or structure, or an irregular shaped freestanding sign, the area of the sign shall be the area of not more than three regular geometric shapes that encompasses the perimeter of all the elements in the display.
  - a. When separate elements are organized to form a single sign, but the elements are separated by open space, the area of the sign shall include all the display areas, including the space between the elements.
  - b. Up to five percent of the permitted sign area may be considered minor protrusions, and extend outside of the maximum limitation of three geometric shapes and are, therefore, exempted from being included as part of the sign area.
4. For freestanding and projecting signs the sign area shall be computed by the measurement of one of the faces when two display faces are joined, are parallel, or are within 30 degrees of being parallel to each other and are part of the same sign structure. For any sign that has two display surfaces that do not comply with the above regulation, or has more than two display surfaces then each surface shall be included when determining the area of the sign.
 

In determining the area of freestanding signs the following shall be exempted from being considered as part of the maximum permitted area:

  - a. One half square foot of sign area shall be exempted for each digit of the street number, up to a maximum of three square feet.
  - b. The portion of a solid sign base or other sign support, up to a maximum height of four feet that:
    - i. Is at least 50 percent screened by landscaping at the time of installation; or

- 1  
2                   ii.     Complies with the requirements of subsection  
                          21.10.040.A.4.d. below.
- 3                   c.     The air space under a freestanding sign between supporting posts,  
4                   other air space between a projecting sign and the wall to which it is  
5                   attached (See Figure 1)
- 6                   d.     Additional base area, framing or structural supports or other portions  
7                   of the sign when such areas are determined to be:
- 8                   i.     Constructed and designed with materials which are similar to,  
9                   or compatible with, the architecture of the building or other  
10                   site features;
- 11                   ii.    Not intended or designed to include messages; and
- 12                   iii.   Exclusive of colors, trademarks, or any other decorative  
13                   design features that are primarily intended to attract attention,  
14                   rather than be unobtrusive or compatible with the architecture  
15                   of the building or other site features.
- 16                   All other exemptions to the area of a sign may only be approved by the Urban  
17                   Design Commission.
- 18                   5.     The height of a freestanding sign shall be measured from the elevation of the  
19                   edge of the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to, or nearest the sign  
20                   structure, to the highest point of the sign, its frame, or decorative features.

Figure 1. Calculation of freestanding sign area



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**B. Determining Building Frontage and Building Unit**

For the purposes of this section and for determining allowable wall sign area, the building frontage shall include the building walls that: face a public street, face a parking lot which serves the use, or that contains a public entrance to the uses therein. For the purposes of these regulations, a public alley is not considered a public street.

1. The building frontage shall be measured along such building wall between the exterior faces of the exterior sidewalls.
2. In the case of an irregular wall surface, a single straight line approximating such wall surface shall be used to measure the wall's length.
3. For multi-occupant buildings, the portion of a building that is owned or leased by a single occupant shall be considered a building unit. The building frontage for a building unit shall be measured from the centerline of the party walls defining the building unit.
4. The primary frontage shall be the portion of a frontage that serves as the main access point to a building or building unit. (See Figure 2)
5. The secondary frontage shall be all other frontages. (See Figure 2)

**C. Determining Public Street Frontage**

For the purposes of this section and for determining allowable freestanding sign area, public street frontage is the length of the public street, which is contiguous to the adjacent private parcel for which the sign is being considered. For the purposes of these regulations a public alley is not considered a public street. For the purposes of this section, standards, which are based on a minimum length of the public street frontage, shall also apply to “any portion thereof” unless the specific section states otherwise.

**D. Determining Sign Setbacks**

The required setbacks for the sign shall apply to all elements of the sign including its frame and base.

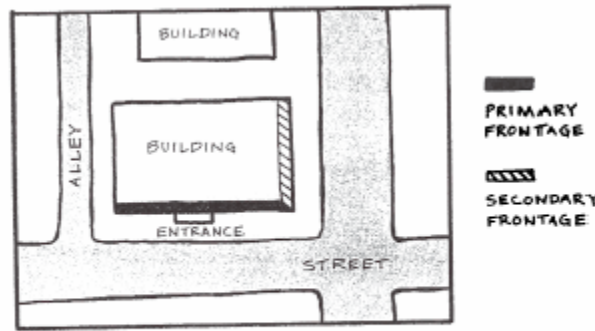


Figure 2: Primary and Secondary Frontage

**21.10.050 SIGNS IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7, R-9, R-10, RMX, TA<sup>(A)</sup>)**

Signs for all residential and nonresidential uses in residential districts shall comply with the standards set forth in this section.

**A. Basic Regulations for Signs in the Residential Districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7, R-9, R-10, RMX, TA<sup>(a)</sup>)**

<sup>(a)</sup>For the TA District, the standards in this section only apply to residential parcels.

Signs for all residential and nonresidential uses in residential districts shall be limited in number, area, height, and setback based on the type of use, as set forth in Table 21.10-1.

**B. Supplemental Standards for All Freestanding Signs**

**1. Changeable Copy**

Freestanding signs for permitted nonresidential uses may have up to 100 percent of the permitted sign area set forth in Table 21.10-1 devoted to changeable copy.





**TABLE 21.10-1: SIGNS IN THE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7, R-9, R-10, RMX, TA(2))**

Type	Maximum Number Permitted	Maximum Area Per Sign	Standards for Freestanding Signs	
			Maximum Height	Minimum Setback from ROW
<b>(B) Multi-Family Buildings</b>				
1. Permanent Signs				
a. Building Signplates	1 per public entrance to building	2 sq. ft.	--	--
b. Freestanding Signs	1 per development entrance or per 500 feet of public street frontage, whichever is greater	30 sq. ft.	8 ft.	Equal to height of sign
2. Temporary Signs				
a. Freestanding Signs (1)		6 sq. ft.		
<b>(C) Permitted Nonresidential Uses</b>				
1. Permanent Signs				
a. Building Signplates	1 per address	2 sq. ft.	--	--
b. Primary Building Signs	Not Applicable	½ sq. ft. of sign for every lineal ft. of primary building frontage	--	--
c. Freestanding Signs	1 per 500 feet of public street frontage	40 sq. ft. (4)	8 ft.	10 ft.
2. Temporary Signs				
a. Freestanding Signs (1)	2	6 sq. ft.		
<b>(D) Instructional Signs</b>				
Shall be exempt from requirements when in compliance with subsection 21.10.050.C.				
(1) Temporary signs are also subject to provisions of subsection 21.10.050.D.				
(2) For the TA District, the standards of this section only apply to residential parcelst.				
(3) A sign plate is not in violation of these regulations if a larger sign is determined to be necessary to accommodate identification as mandated by the Municipality.				
(4) A sign which is located within 40 feet of a property line of a parcel which is either occupied by, or is zoned for, a single family or two family dwelling unit shall be limited to a maximum area of 30 square feet.				

1



Figure 3. Non-residential Uses  
 Illustration: 7 ft height, 27 sq ft area  
 Maximum Permitted: 8 ft height, 40 sq ft area



Figure 4. Subdivision Entrance Sign  
 Illustration: 5 ft height, 24 sq ft area (Approx.)  
 Maximum Permitted: 8 ft height, 30 sq ft area

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**D. Temporary Signs**

1. **For Single Family Dwellings, Two Family Dwellings, or Townhouses**  
 Two temporary signs are permitted at any given time on any one parcel. These temporary signs may be displayed for an unspecified amount of time provided these signs do not contain any commercial messages except for the sale or leasing of the property on which the sign is located.
2. **For Multiple-Family Developments and Nonresidential Uses**  
 Two temporary freestanding signs that do not exceed six square feet each may be erected for an unspecified time.
3. **Vacant Parcels**  
 The following signs are permitted for an unspecified period of time:
  - a. For a parcel equal to or less than one acre, one temporary sign is permitted up to a maximum of 16 square feet.
  - b. For a parcel greater than one acre, one temporary sign is permitted up to 32 square feet. A parcel that also has frontage on a second public street is entitled to a second sign, not to exceed 32 square feet, provided that the length of the frontage along the second public street is a minimum of 300 feet.

Such signs may not be used to display commercial messages referring to products or services that are unrelated to current or pending activities on or uses of the property.

**21.10.060 SIGNS IN THE PUBLIC LANDS AND INSTITUTIONS (PLI), OFFICE (O), WATERSHED (W), OPEN LANDS (OL), AND PARKS AND RECREATION (PR) DISTRICTS**

Signs in the PLI, O, W, OL, and PR districts shall conform to the standards set forth in this section.

**A. Basic Standards for Building Signs**

**1. Maximum Area of Permanent Building Signs**

Building signs shall conform to the maximum area limitations set forth in Table 21.10-2.

<b>TABLE 21.10-2: BUILDING SIGNS IN THE PLI, O, , W. OL, AND PR DISTRICTS</b>		
<b>Sign Type</b>	<b>Maximum Number Permitted</b>	<b>Base Area Permitted on a Single Building Frontage</b>
Signplate	1/address	2 square feet
Building Sign on Primary Frontage (1)(2)		1 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of primary frontage (3)
Building Sign on Secondary Frontage (1)(2)		0.6 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of secondary frontage (3)
Instructional Sign	Shall be exempt from regulations when in compliance with subsection 21.10.050.C.	

(1) See subsection 21.10.040.B.  
 (2) The maximum sign area that is permitted for primary frontage may be transferred to a secondary frontage provided that the maximum sign area on any secondary frontage does not exceed one (1) square foot for each lineal foot of frontage.  
 (3) The maximum building sign area for a building or any portion of the building which is setback more than 200 feet from the right-of-way that provides primary access to the site may be increased by 25 percent, provided the building is visible from any portion of the adjacent street.

**2. Placement of Building Signs**

**a.** The building signs permitted in Table 21.10-2 may be placed on the wall, awnings, canopies, parapets, or be a projecting sign in compliance with subsection 21.10.060.A.2.b. below.

**b.** Projecting signs shall be limited to occupants that have a minimum of ten feet of occupant building frontage provided that:

**i.** All projecting signs shall have a maximum height of 14 feet and a minimum clearance of eight feet from the ground to the bottom of the sign. A projecting sign may be a minimum of six feet from the ground when it is located above a landscaped area or other area that does not permit pedestrian traffic beneath the sign.

**ii.** Projecting signs shall be placed on the building so the signs are intended to be viewed by the pedestrians on the abutting street or pedestrian way.

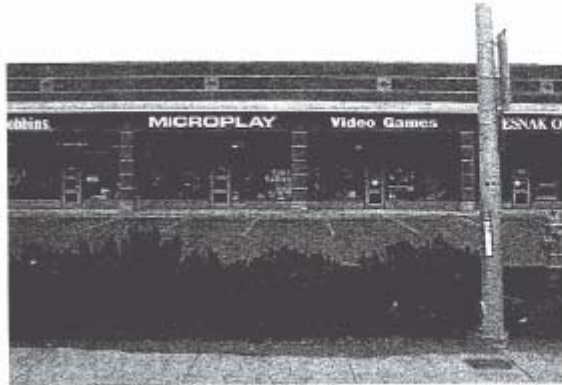


Figure 5. Building Signs  
 Illustration: 1.0 sq ft per lineal ft of frontage  
 Maximum Permitted: 1.0 sq ft per lineal ft of frontage

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**B. Basic Standards for Permanent Freestanding Signs**

**1. Maximum Number, Area and Height, Minimum Setback of Permanent Freestanding Signs**

Permanent freestanding signs shall comply with the maximum number, area, and height limitations, and minimum setback from the street right-of-way set forth in Table 21.10-3.

**2. Sign Area Proportions**

For any freestanding sign, the horizontal portion (width) of the face shall not exceed four times the height of the face.

TABLE 21.10-3: FREESTANDING SIGNS STANDARDS IN THE PLI, W, O, OL, AND PR DISTRICTS	
Maximum Height	15 ft.
Maximum Area	120 sq. ft. for PLI, W, OL, and PR districts; 80 sq. ft. for the O district
Number/Frontage	1 per 300 ft. frontage up to a maximum of two
Minimum Separation	200 ft.
Minimum Setback from R.O.W.	None on a Class II or greater street; otherwise 10 ft.
Minimum Setback from Side Lot Line (2)	10 ft.
Entrance and Exit Signs (1)	
Maximum Area	6 sq. ft.
Maximum Height	5 ft.
(1) Entrance and exit signs, which are permitted in addition to the above freestanding signs, shall be limited to two for each entrance/exit driveway.	
(2) If the side lot is adjacent to a residential district then the minimum setback from the side lot line is 30 feet.	

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**C. Supplemental Standards for Freestanding Signs**

**1. Number of Freestanding Signs Allowed**

- a. Lots with less than 300 lineal feet of frontage may have only one freestanding sign per frontage.
- b. Lots with 300 or more lineal feet of frontage may have two freestanding signs per frontage.
- c. No more than two freestanding signs are allowed along any one frontage. Freestanding signs must be separated by a minimum distance of 150 feet. On corner lots, the property frontage on both streets shall be considered when measuring the separation.

**2. Wrapping Structural Steel Supports**

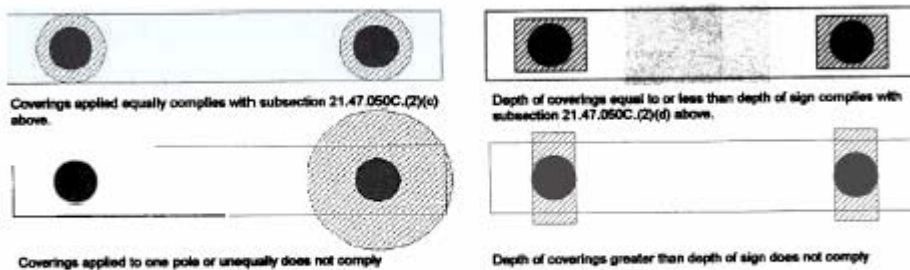


Figure 6: Examples of pole wrap. Poles depicted in plan view.

- a. All structural steel supports shall have coverings that collectively total at least 33 percent of the width of the sign at its widest point.
- b. The width of the covering shall be symmetrical for all supports. (See Figure 6)
- c. The depth of the support coverings shall not exceed the depth of the sign unless the supports are located on the perimeter of the sign. (See Figure 6)
- d. In all circumstances, the covering shall extend from four inches above the ground to the base of the sign face.
- e. The following materials shall not be the visible covering for structural steel supports:
  - i. T-111
  - ii. Plywood
  - iii. Particle Board
  - iv. Sheet Metal of less than 24 gauge

- 1 v. Aluminum of less than .063 inches
- 2
- 3 **3. Changeable Copy**
- 4 Freestanding signs may have up to 30 percent of the permitted sign area set
- 5 forth in Table 21.10-3 devoted to changeable copy.
- 6
- 7 **a.** Changeable copy may only be changed manually, provided, however,
- 8 if the business or institution has frontage on a Class II or greater
- 9 street, the copy may be changed electronically or mechanically as
- 10 well as manually.
- 11 **b.** The changeable copy, which is changed electronically or
- mechanically, shall not be changed more than one time per 20-
- second period.

*Figure 7. Freestanding sign in PLI Zone  
 Illustration: 3 ft. height, 45 sq ft area (approx.)  
 Maximum Permitted: 15 ft height, 120 sq ft area*



- 12
- 13 **D. Instructional Signs**
- 14 Signs that comply with the definition of “instructional sign” shall be permitted as
- 15 needed provided such signs comply with the following:
- 16
- 17 **1.** The signs are not larger than necessary to serve the intended instructional
- purpose;
- 18 **2.** The number of instructional signs located on the site are the minimum needed
- 19 to serve the intended instructional purpose; and
- 20 **3.** The signs are not located or designed to be legible or serve to attract
- 21 attention beyond the perimeter of the site.
- 22 **4.** The signs may be placed on the base of a permitted freestanding sign without
- 23 the area of such instructional sign, or the background, being considered as
- 24 part of or added to the area of the freestanding sign.

1                   **E.       Temporary Signs**

2                   Temporary signs in the PLI, O, W, OL, and PR Districts are permitted pursuant to  
3                   Schedule 21.10-4 as set forth below:

4

<b>TABLE 21.10-4: TEMPORARY SIGNS IN THE PLI, O, W, OL, and PR DISTRICTS</b>	
Maximum Area	100 sq. ft. (32 sq. ft. rigid material)
Maximum Number of Signs Per Principal Use	1
Maximum Number of Display Days	60
Lighting	Not permitted.
Motion	Animation or flashing is prohibited
Maximum Height (Freestanding)	Same as permanent signs
Setbacks	Same as permanent signs

5

6                   **F.       Display of Commercial Flags**

7                   In the PLI, W, O, OL, and PR Districts, a maximum of three flagpoles may be erected  
8                   on any parcel provided that:

- 9                   1.       A maximum of three commercial flags may be displayed simultaneously;
- 10                  2.       The maximum length of the flag pole shall be 30 feet; and
- 11                  3.       The total maximum size of all commercial flags displayed shall not exceed  
12                  120 square feet. Subject to the total maximum size of commercial flags, a  
13                  commercial or non-commercial organization may display alongside a national  
14                  or governmental flag, one organizational flag not larger than the national or  
15                  governmental flag.
- 16                  4.       The corporate or commercial flag may only display the name, trademark, or  
17                  logo of the business on the parcel and such flag may not be used for other  
18                  business or advertising purposes.

19                  **G.       Unified Sign Plan**

20                  To recognize and accommodate irregular site shapes (which are typically  
21                  characterized by narrow lot frontages resulting in some buildings with extraordinarily  
22                  large setbacks and limited visibility to a public street) multiple contiguous lots and/or  
23                  tracts may be considered as a single site for the purposes of determining the size,  
24                  number, and placement of freestanding signs permitted pursuant to this section.  
25                  Solely for the purposes of this section:

- 26                  1.       The number and area of the freestanding signs permitted, pursuant to Table  
27                  21.10-3, shall be determined based on size and frontage of the multiple  
28                  properties being considered as a single parcel.
- 29                  2.       After a unified sign plan has been approved by the Municipality and a permit  
30                  has been issued, the sign rights or limitations shall be recorded with the State  
31                  District Recorder's Office as a deed restriction.



3. Revocation of a unified sign plan must be approved by all participants in the plan; all signs on the affected properties must be in compliance with this code before the plan can be revoked.

4. This section shall not be interpreted as authorizing the erection or maintenance of any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or the erection or maintenance of any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the main traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway with the purpose of the message displayed being read from that travel way, in a manner that would conflict with the provisions of Alaska Statutes sections 19.25.075 – 19.25.180.

**21.10.070 SIGNS IN THE NONRESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3, AC, MC, IC, I-1, I-2, MI, NMU-1, NMU-2, CCMU, RCMU, MMU, AD, AND TA<sup>(A)</sup>)**

Signs in the nonresidential districts (CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3, AC, MC, IC, I-1, I-2, MI, NMU-1, NMU-2, CCMU, RCMU, MMU, AD, and TA<sup>(a)</sup>) shall conform to the standards set forth in this section.

<sup>(a)</sup> For the TA District, the standards of this section only apply to non-residential parcels.

**A. Basic Standards for Building Signs**

**1. Maximum Area of Permanent Building Signs**

Building signs shall conform to the maximum area limitations set forth in Table 21.10-5.

**2. Placement of Building Signs**

a. The building signs permitted in Table 21.10-5 may be placed on the wall, awnings, canopies, parapets, or be a projecting sign in compliance with subsection 21.10.070.A.2.b.

*Figure 8. Building Signs-General  
Illustration: 1.77 sq ft per lineal ft frontage  
Maximum Permitted: 2.00 sq ft per lineal ft frontage*



b. Projecting signs shall be limited to occupants that have a minimum of ten feet of occupant building frontage provided that:

i. All projecting signs shall have a maximum height of 14 feet and a minimum clearance of eight feet from the ground to the bottom of the sign. A projecting sign may be a minimum of

six feet from the ground when it is located above a landscaped area or other area that does not permit pedestrian traffic beneath the sign.

- ii. Projecting signs shall be placed on the building so that the signs are intended to be viewed by the pedestrians on the abutting street or pedestrian way.

**3. Additional Building Signs for Multiple Story Buildings**

In addition to the building signs in subsection 21.10.070.A one additional sign is permitted on each of the building’s primary and secondary frontages according to the following. For a building with two floors the additional permitted sign area is 40 square feet for an eligible building wall. This additional sign area may be increased by ten square feet for each additional floor in the building provided that the sign is placed at the floor height for which the bonus is given.

**TABLE 21.10-5: BUILDING SIGNS IN ALL NONRESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS (CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3, AC, MC, IC, I-1, I-2, MI, NMU-1, NMU-2, CCMU, RCMU, MMU, AD, and TA (1))**

Sign Type	Maximum Number Permitted	Base Area Permitted on a Single Building Frontage (2)
Signplate	1/address	2 square feet
Building Sign on Primary Frontage (3)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.2 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of primary frontage in the CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3, CCMU, RCMU, and MMU Districts.</li> <li>• 2 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of primary frontage in all other districts regulated in section 21.10.070 (4)</li> </ul>
Building Sign on Secondary Frontage		1.2 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of secondary frontage
Building Sign on Door of Rear Entrance		2 sq. ft. per each door
(E) Instructional Sign	Shall be exempt from regulations when in compliance with subsection 21.10.070.D	

(1) For the TA district, the standards in this section only apply to non-residential parcels.  
 (2) See subsection 21.10.040.B.  
 (3) The maximum sign area that is permitted for primary frontage may be transferred to a secondary frontage provided that the maximum sign area on any secondary frontage does not exceed two square feet for each lineal foot of frontage.  
 (4) The maximum building sign area for a building or any portion of the building that is setback more than 200 feet from the right-of-way that provides primary access to the site may be increased by 25 percent, provided the building is visible from the street.

**B. Basic Standards for Permanent Freestanding Signs**

**1. Maximum Area and Height, Minimum Setback of Permanent Freestanding Signs**

Permanent freestanding signs shall comply with the maximum area and height limitations and minimum setback from the street right-of-way set forth in Table 21.10-6.

**2. Sign Area Proportions**

For any freestanding sign greater than 15 feet in height but less than 20 feet, the horizontal portion (width) of the face shall not exceed four times the height

of the face. For any freestanding sign between 20 feet and 25 feet in height, the horizontal portion (width) of the face shall not exceed three times the height of the face.

**C. Supplemental Standards for Freestanding Signs**

**1. Number of Freestanding Signs Allowed**

a. Lots with less than 300 linear feet of frontage may have only one freestanding sign per frontage.

**TABLE 21.10-6: FREESTANDING SIGN REGULATIONS**

	NMU-1 and NMU-2	TA (Commercial and Industrial parcels)	CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3, CCMU, RCMU, and MMU	AC, IC, I-1, I-2, MC, MI, and AD
(A) Maximum Height	12 ft.	12 ft.	8 ft.	25 ft.
(B) Maximum Area	80 sq. ft.	80 sq. ft.	64 sq. ft.	0.7 sq. ft. per 1 lineal foot of frontage (3)
(C) Number/Frontage	See subsection 21.10.070.C			
(D) Separation	150 ft.			
(E) Minimum Setback from R.O.W.	0 ft.	10 ft.	0 ft.	0 ft.
(F) Minimum Setback from side lot line (2)	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.
(G) Entrance and Exit Signs (1)				
Maximum Area	6 sq. ft.			
Maximum Height	5 ft.			
(1) Entrance and Exit signs, which are permitted in addition to the above freestanding signs, shall be limited to two for each entrance/exit driveway.				
(2) If the side lot line is adjacent to a residential district then the minimum setback from the side lot line is 30 feet.				
(3) The maximum allowable area shall not be less than 70 square feet nor greater than 200 square feet.				

b. Lots with 300 or more lineal feet of frontage may have two freestanding signs per frontage.

c. No more than two freestanding signs are allowed along any one frontage. Freestanding signs must be separated by a minimum distance of 150 feet. On corner lots, the property frontage on both streets shall be considered when measuring the separation.

**2. Changeable Copy**

Freestanding signs may have up to 30 percent of the permitted sign area set forth in Table 21.10-6 devoted to changeable copy.

- 1 a. The changeable copy shall not change more than one time per 5-
- 2 second period.
- 3 b. Changeable copy may be changed electronically, mechanically, or
- 4 manually.
- 5 **3. Wrapping Structural Steel Supports**
- 6 a. Signs that are eight feet or less in height with exposed structural steel
- 7 support: The structural steel supports shall have a covering that
- 8 totals at least four times the width of the structural steel at its widest
- 9 point and is parallel to the sign face.
- 10 b. Signs that are greater than eight feet in height but less than 15 feet in
- 11 height: All structural steel supports shall have coverings that
- 12 collectively total at least 33 percent of the width of the sign at its
- 13 widest point and are parallel to the sign face.
- 14 c. Signs 15 feet or greater in height that have a single structural steel
- 15 support: The structural steel support shall have a covering that totals
- 16 at least 25 percent of the width of the sign at its widest point and is
- 17 parallel to the sign face.
- 18 d. Signs 15 feet or greater in height that have more than one structural
- 19 steel support: The structural steel supports shall have coverings that
- 20 collectively total at least 33 percent of the width of the sign at its
- 21 widest point.
- 22 e. The width of the covering shall be symmetrical for all supports. (See
- 23 Figure 9)
- 24 f. The depth of the support coverings shall not exceed the depth of the
- 25 sign unless the supports are located on the perimeter of the sign.
- 26 (See Figure 9)

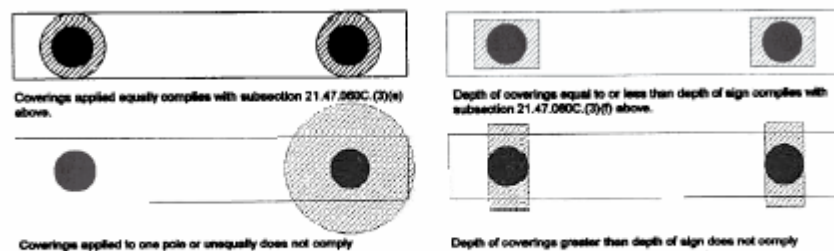


Figure 9: Examples of pole wrap. Poles depicted in plan view.

- 27 g. In all circumstances, the covering shall extend from four inches above
- 28 the ground to the base of the sign face.
- 29 h. The following materials shall not be the visible covering for structural
- 30 steel supports:

- 1 i. T-111;
- 2 ii. Plywood;
- 3 iii. Particle Board;
- 4 iv. Sheet metal of less than 24 gauge;
- 5 v. Aluminum of less than .063 inches.



*Figure 10. Freestanding sign  
Illustration: 21 ft height, area unknown  
Maximum Permitted: 25 ft height*



*Figure 11. Freestanding sign  
Illustration: 14 ft height, 85 sq ft area  
Maximum Permitted: 25 ft height, 200 sq ft area*

6 **4. Multi-Occupant Facilities**

7 When a freestanding sign is constructed on a site that has more than one  
8 occupant, it is the property owner's responsibility to determine if the sign area  
9 shall be devoted to identification of the building(s), the anchor occupant, all  
10 occupants, or some combination thereof.

11 **D. Instructional Signs**

12 Signs that comply with the definition of "instructional sign" shall be permitted as  
13 needed provided such signs comply with the following:

- 14 1. The signs are not larger than necessary to serve the intended instructional  
15 purpose;
- 16 2. The number of instructional signs located on the site are the minimum needed  
17 to serve the intended instructional purpose; and
- 18 3. The signs are not located or designed to be legible or serve to attract  
19 attention beyond the perimeter of the site.
- 20 4. The signs may be placed on the base of a permitted freestanding sign without  
21 the area of such instructional sign, or the background, being considered as  
22 part of or added to the area of the freestanding sign.

**E. Unified Sign Plan**

To recognize and accommodate irregular site shapes (which are typically characterized by narrow lot frontages resulting in some buildings with extraordinarily large setbacks and limited visibility to a public street) multiple contiguous lots and/or tracts may be considered as a single site for the purposes of determining the size, number, and placement of freestanding signs permitted pursuant to this section. Solely for the purposes of this section:

1. The number and area of the freestanding signs permitted, pursuant to Table 21.10-6, shall be determined based on size and frontage of the multiple properties being considered as a single parcel.
2. After a unified sign plan has been approved by the Municipality and a permit has been issued, the sign rights or limitations shall be recorded with the State District Recorder's Office as a deed restriction.
3. Revocation of a unified sign plan must be approved by all participants in the plan; all signs on the affected properties must be in compliance with this code before the plan can be revoked.
4. This subsection shall not be interpreted as authorizing the erection or maintenance of any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or the erection or maintenance of any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the main traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway with the purpose of the message displayed being read from that travel way, in a manner that would conflict with the provisions of Alaska Statutes sections 19.25.075 – 19.25.180.

**F. Display of Commercial Flags**

In a C or I District a maximum of three flagpoles may be erected on any parcel provided that:

1. A maximum of three commercial flags may be displayed simultaneously;
2. The maximum length of the flag pole shall be 30 feet; and
3. The total maximum size of all commercial flags displayed shall not exceed 120 square feet. Subject to the total maximum size of commercial flags, a commercial or non-commercial organization may display alongside a national or governmental flag, one organizational flag not larger than the national or governmental flag.
4. The corporate or commercial flag may only display the name, trademark, or logo of the business on the parcel and such flag may not be used for other business or advertising purposes.

**G. Temporary Signs**

Temporary signs in nonresidential districts are permitted pursuant to Table 21.10-7 as set forth below:

TABLE 21.10-7: TEMPORARY SIGNS	
Maximum Area	100 sq. (32 sq. ft. rigid material)
Maximum Number of Signs Per Principal Use	1
Maximum Number of Display Days	60
Lighting	Internally illuminated or lighted signs are prohibited.
Motion	Animation or flashing is prohibited
Maximum Height (Freestanding)	Same as permanent signs
Setbacks	Same as permanent signs

**21.10.080 PROHIBITED SIGNS**

The following signs are prohibited:

- A. Roof signs
- B. Billboards and other off-premise signs
- C. Any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the main traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway erected or maintained with the purpose of the message displayed being read from that travel way, that would conflict with the provisions of Alaska Statutes sections 19.25.075 – 19.25.180.
- D. Portable signs.
- E. Flashing, moving, animated, coursing, blinker, racer-type, intermittent, rotating, moving or revolving signs and/or devices, whirligig devices, inflatable signs and tethered balloons, pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, and other similar types of attention-getting devices except for changeable copy signs when in compliance with the applicable regulations in this chapter.
- F. Signs in the AF Antenna Farm District except for warning signs and identification placards required in subsection 21.05.040K.5.

**21.10.090 SUPPLEMENTAL SIGN STANDARDS**

**A. Illumination of Permanent and Temporary Signs**

Permanent and temporary signs shall be permitted to be illuminated in compliance with the following:

- 1. Signs shall not include animated, flashing, moving or intermittent illumination except that the messages may change no more frequently than the rates specified in subsections 21.10.050.B., 21.10.060.C., and 21.10.070.C.

- 
- 1                    2.        Temporary signs shall not be internally illuminated. Any external illumination  
2                    of these signs shall be permitted only in commercial and industrial zones.
- 3                    3.        All internally illuminated building signs or free-standing signs shall comply with  
4                    the following:
- 5                    a.        Except as provided in subsection 21.10.090.A.3.c. below, the sign  
6                    shall be constructed with either: an opaque background and  
7                    translucent letters and symbols; or, a translucent darker colored  
8                    background with a lighter contrasting color for the letters and  
9                    symbols. Registered trademarks and logos are exempt from this  
10                    provision.
- 11                    b.        No internal lighting shall include exposed incandescent or fluorescent  
12                    bulbs.
- 13                    c.        A changeable copy sign with dark colored letters or symbols on a  
14                    lighter contrasting translucent background may be internally  
15                    illuminated if the internally illuminated area of the sign does not  
16                    exceed 20 square feet.
- 17                    4.        Freestanding signs more than 15 feet high shall only be internally illuminated.  
18                    Signs less than or equal to 15 feet in height may be either internally or  
19                    externally illuminated.
- 20                    5.        The external illumination of freestanding signs shall comply with the following:
- 21                    a.        Any external lighting of signs that have a height of between eight feet  
22                    and 15 feet must be from the top of the sign and directed downward;
- 23                    b.        The lighting of signs that have a height of eight feet or less may be  
24                    illuminated from the top of the sign or from the ground.
- 25                    6.        Externally illuminated building signs may only be illuminated from the top of  
26                    the sign.
- 27                    7.        Light sources for externally illuminated signs must be shielded and directed  
28                    so that the light shines on the sign and that illumination beyond the sign face  
29                    is minimized.
- 30                    8.        Freestanding signs accessory to a single-family dwelling, two-family, or  
31                    townhouse use in a residential district shall not be illuminated.
- 32                    9.        Signs on a building or parcel in a residential district that has multi-family uses  
33                    shall not be internally illuminated.
- 34                    10.      For signs on permitted non-residential uses in residential districts the  
35                    illumination may be from external sources or by internal illumination of the  
36                    letters and logos only; internal illumination of the background portion of the  
37                    sign is prohibited.



1 11. If a registered trademark or logo is not in compliance with the illumination  
2 requirements of this section, then such area of non-compliance shall be  
3 limited to a maximum of 30 percent of the allowable sign area.

4 **B. Preservation of Sight Lines**

5 For the purpose of assuring that drivers and pedestrians have adequate visibility at  
6 the intersection of a roadway, street, driveway, trail, or alley, no sign or portion of a  
7 sign between a height of two and one-half feet and eight feet shall conflict with the  
8 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Sight  
9 Distance Triangle specifications. (See also subsection 21.06.020A.8.)

10 **C. Construction Standards**

11 1. The construction, erection, safety, and maintenance of signs shall comply with  
12 the adopted building code as amended.

13 2. Signs shall be structurally sound and located so as to pose no threat to  
14 pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

15 3. Permanent signs shall be fabricated on and of materials that are of good  
16 quality and good durability.

17 4. Electric signs and all permanent signs involving structural requirements of the  
18 building code shall be installed, repaired, altered, and serviced only by a  
19 contractor licensed to perform such tasks.

20 5. No sign shall be erected so as to obstruct any window, door, fire escape,  
21 balcony, platform, stairway, ladder, vent, or other means of ingress and  
22 egress of any building.

23 6. No sign shall be attached to a utility pole, tree, trash receptacle, bench, or  
24 other structure not intended or approved as a sign support.

25 7. Temporary signs shall be durable and weather-resistant and fastened or  
26 anchored sufficiently, whether attached to the building or positioned in the  
27 ground.

28 8. No sign regulated by any of the provisions of this section shall be erected in  
29 the right-of-way, in proximity to railroad crossings, or at the intersection of any  
30 streets in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision; or at any  
31 location where, by reason of the position, shape, or color, it may interfere  
32 with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with, any authorized traffic sign  
33 signal or device; or which makes use of the words "STOP," "LOOK,"  
34 "DANGER", or any other word, phrase, symbol or character in such a manner  
35 as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic.

36 9. In the event there is a conflict between the provisions of this section and the  
37 provisions of any applicable building codes, the provisions of the applicable  
38 building code shall govern.

**D. Maintenance**

All signs shall be maintained in accordance with the following:

1. The property owner, occupant, or other person responsible for the sign shall maintain the sign in a condition fit for the intended use and he or she shall have a continuing obligation to comply with all building code requirements.
2. If the Director finds that any sign is unsafe, insecure, a menace to the public, notice shall be given in writing by the Director to the owner. The owner of the business shall, within 48 hours of such notification, correct such unsafe condition or remove the sign. If the correction has not been made within the 48 hours, the sign may be removed or altered by the Municipality to comply with these regulations at the expense of the owner or occupant of the property upon which the sign is located. The Director may cause any sign, which, in the Municipality's opinion, creates a danger to persons or property to be removed immediately and without notice.
3. Whenever any sign, either conforming or nonconforming to these regulations, is required to be removed for the purpose of repair, refurbishing, or repainting, the same may be done without a permit or any payment of fees provided that all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. There shall be no alteration or remodeling to the sign base, sign support(s), or the mounting of the sign itself.
  - b. There shall be no enlargement or increase in any of the dimensions of the sign or its structure.
  - c. The sign shall be accessory to a legally permitted, conditional or nonconforming use.
4. The Director may order any sign to be repaired whenever needed to keep the sign in a safe condition. All supports, guys, braces, and anchors for such signs shall be maintained in a safe condition.
5. The sign face of any permanent sign which advertises a business that has not been conducted on the premises for 180 consecutive days or fails to serve the purposes for which it was intended, or evidences a lack of maintenance, shall be removed by the owner, agent, or person having the beneficial use of the building, structure or land upon which such sign is located, within 30 days after written notice by the Director and the sign area shall be replaced by a neutral, single background color panel or similar cover. If the sign is comprised of individually raised letters then the letters shall be removed. Upon failure to comply with such notice within the time specified in such order, the Director is hereby authorized to cause removal of such sign, and any expense incident thereto shall be paid by the owner of the property on which such sign is located.

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**21.10.100 REGULATIONS FOR NONCONFORMING SIGNS**

**A. Amortization of Permanent Signs**

Any lawful permanent sign built prior to the adoption of this chapter that does not comply with the maximum height, maximum area, or the number of signs permitted as set-forth in this section shall be removed or altered to comply with the requirements of this section by October 1, 2013. The maximum area requirements shall apply to the total area of all signs on the property.

**B. Termination**

A nonconforming sign shall immediately lose its legal nonconforming status, and therefore shall be brought into conformance with this section or removed, when any of the following occur:

1. The size or shape of the sign is changed.
2. The sign structure is altered. Alteration does not include repairs and/or maintenance.
3. The nonconforming sign is accessory to a nonconforming use that has lost its nonconforming status.

**C. Amortization of Illuminated Signs**

Any illuminated sign that does not meet the requirements of subsection 21.10.090.A shall be altered to comply with the requirements of this section by October 1, 2006

**D. Amortization of Pole Signs**

Any sign where the structural steel supports are visible and which does not meet the requirements of subsections 21.10.060.C.2. or 21.10.070.C.3., shall be altered to comply with the requirements of this section by October 1, 2006.

**E. Amortization of Animated Signs**

Any sign which contains non-complying animation, changeable copy, or flashing or moving parts shall be altered to comply with the requirements of this section by April 1, 2004

**F. Amortization of Converted Signs**

Any non-conforming sign that was originally portable or temporary, was subsequently affixed to the ground or a building, and does not comply with the height, area, or the number of signs permitted requirements of these regulations shall be removed, altered, reconstructed, or reinstalled to be in compliance with these regulations by October 1, 2006.

**G. Maintenance of Nonconforming Signs**

Nonconforming signs shall continue to be maintained in safe condition pursuant to the building regulations of the Municipality until such sign is required to be removed as set forth in this section.

1           **H.     Alteration, Relocation or Replacement of Nonconforming Signs**

2           A nonconforming sign shall not be structurally altered, relocated, or replaced unless it  
3           is brought into compliance with the provisions of this section.

4           **I.     Reconstruction of Damaged Sign**

5           If a sign and/or its support are damaged to the extent where the repair cost exceeds  
6           50 percent of the replacement cost of the sign, the sign shall be removed or brought  
7           into compliance. If the repair costs do not exceed 50 percent of the replacement cost  
8           of the sign, the Director may authorize the sign to be repaired, provided all repair work  
9           is completed within 90 days, subject to the Director extending the time for good cause,  
10          of the date the Director determines the damage requires replacement or permits  
11          repair. In no event may a sign be maintained in an unsafe condition during the  
12          process of this determination or the period necessary for repairs.

13          **J.     Historic Signs**

14          The Urban Design Commission may grant exceptions to these standards whenever a  
15          sign or property has been designated a historic sign pursuant to the guidelines and  
16          criteria established and adopted by the Urban Design Commission.

17          **K.     Extension of Time to Comply**

18          The dates established in this section for a sign to be brought into compliance with the  
19          requirements of these regulations may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Examiners  
20          and Appeals by the owner or leasee of the nonconforming sign pursuant to section  
21          21.11.060. In evaluating the extension of time for a nonconforming use, the Zoning  
22          Board of Examiners and Appeals shall consider, in addition to the criteria of section  
23          21.11.060 the following factors to determine whether the owner of the sign has had  
24          reasonable amount of time to recoup his investment:

- 25          1.       The value of the sign at the time of construction and the length of time the  
26                sign has been in place;
- 27          2.       The life expectancy of the original investment in the sign and its salvage  
28                value, if any;
- 29          3.       The amount of depreciation and/or amortization of the sign already claimed  
30                for tax or accounting purposes;
- 31          4.       The length of the current tenant lease or expected occupancy compared to  
32                the date the sign is to be brought into compliance;
- 33          5.       The extent to which the sign is not in compliance with the requirements of this  
34                chapter; and
- 35          6.       The degree to which the Board determines that the sign is consistent with the  
36                purposes of this section.

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1 **21.10.110 VARIANCES**

2 The Urban Design Commission shall hear and decide on any request for a variance to the  
3 regulations in this section 21.10 including:

4 **A.** The maximum sign area, the maximum sign height, the location of the sign, and the  
5 number of signs on the parcel. In evaluating the request for a variance to the  
6 maximum sign height the Urban Design Commission may consider whether there are  
7 special topographic circumstances that would result in a material impairment of  
8 visibility of the sign from the adjacent roadway which significantly diminishes the  
9 owner's or user's ability to continue to communicate adequately and effectively with  
10 the public through the use of the sign.

11 **B.** The portion of the sign structure that should be exempt from being considered part of  
12 the sign area if such exemption has not been granted by the Director pursuant to  
13 subsection 21.10.040.A.4.

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<sup>1</sup> 2005 NOTE: This draft does not include amendments to the sign regulations passed by the Assembly on June 14, 2005. COMMENTARY: This chapter directly carries forward the adopted sign ordinance (Ordinance 2003-62(5-1)) – except for the sign definitions. These definitions have been placed into chapter 21.13, *Definitions*.