



City of Oregon City

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

Meeting Agenda Planning Commission

Monday, March 24, 2014

7:00 PM

Commission Chambers

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Work Session**

2a. Presentation: Review Proposed Sign Code (OCMC Chapter 15.28)

Attachments: [Commission Report](#)
[Proposed Amendments to OCMC Chapter 15.28](#)
[Existing OCMC Chapter 15.28](#)
[Draft Adoption Schedule](#)

3. **Communications**

4. **Adjournment**

Public Comments: The following guidelines are given for citizens presenting information or raising issues relevant to the City but not listed on the agenda.

- *Complete a Comment Card prior to the meeting and submit it to the staff member.*
- *When the Chair calls your name, proceed to the speaker table and state your name and city of residence into the microphone.*
- *Each speaker is given 3 minutes to speak. To assist in tracking your speaking time, refer to the timer at the dais.*
- *As a general practice, Oregon City Officers do not engage in discussion with those making comments.*

Agenda Posted at City Hall, Pioneer Community Center, Library, and City Web site(oregon-city.legistar.com).

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Staff Report

File Number: PC 14-029

Agenda Date: 3/24/2014

Status: Agenda Ready

To: Planning Commission

Agenda #: 2a.

From: Planner Laura Terway

File Type: Land Use Item

SUBJECT:

Presentation: Review Proposed Sign Code (OCMC Chapter 15.28)

RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):

Provide comments and guidance to items relating to the proposed amendments to the signage standards in OCMC chapter 15.28 as warranted.

BACKGROUND:

After nearly 20 years without a significant change, Oregon City has been working to review our sign regulations to better meet the needs of Oregon City residents and businesses now and into the future. The Oregon City Municipal Code currently has limitations on the type, quantity, size, and material of signage allowed on public and private property in chapter 15.28.

A comprehensive public process has resulted in many community discussions and recommendations to City staff for revisions to the signage standards. City staff has assembled proposed amendments to chapter 15.28 of the Oregon City Municipal Code. A Work Session on February 24, 2014 before the Planning Commission provided background on the robust public involvement process related to the sign code update. This Work Session will review the proposed amendments prior to the first Planning Commission hearing for the Legislative approval process on April 14, 2014.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Amount:

FY(s):

Funding Source:

Oregon City Sign Code Staff Recommendation

March 10, 2014 DRAFT

The following is intended to replace Chapter 15.28 of the Oregon City Municipal Code.

15.28.010 Purpose of sign regulations

This chapter regulates the construction, placement and maintenance of signs to protect and enhance public health, safety, welfare and property. The code:

1. Allows signs compatible with the character and uses allowed in the zoning district in which they are located;
2. Maintains the effectiveness of traffic control signs throughout the city;
3. Prohibits signs, or portions thereof, that conflict with the safe movement of people and emergency services, constitute a public nuisance or hazard, are of unsafe construction, or that demand attention as a result of their dominating size or motion;
4. Maintains and enhances the scenic and other aesthetic qualities of the city; and
5. Supports the economic development of Oregon City businesses.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Purpose Statement

- Minor rewording edits.
- “Supports the economic development of Oregon City businesses” is added.
- The scope of the chapter is separated into a separate section.

15.28.020 Definitions.

“Abandoned sign” means a sign structure where no sign has been in place for a continuous period of at least 6 months.

“A-frame sign” also known as “sandwich board” or “tent sign” means a movable steeply angled sign with two sides that meets at the top in the shape of the letter “A” and is not attached to a structure or the ground.

“Air Blown Sign” A sign that is intended to be inflated by air or other gas.

“Ancillary sign” means any sign allowed by this code, with or without permit, that is not a freestanding, incidental freestanding, wall, roof or projecting sign. If allowed within the zoning designation, ancillary signs include, but are not limited to, signs with an area less than 6 square feet, A-frame signs, flags (excluding attention flags), and banners.

“Attention flag” also known as “flutter,” “feather,” “teardrop,” or “blade,” means a pole-supported sign made of fabric, vinyl, or other similar non-rigid material, where one side of the sign is more than three times as long as any other side.

“Banner” means a sign made of fabric, vinyl, or other similar non-rigid material.

“Billboard” means a sign with a display surface area of three hundred square feet or more, including but not limited to, outdoor advertising signs as defined in ORS 377.710(21).

“Business” means any trade, profession, occupation or pursuit of every kind conducted in the city for gain.

“Construct” or “constructed” means to construct, erect, build, assemble, alter, place, affix, attach, create, recreate, paint, draw or in any way bring into being or establish.

“Display” means an arrangement of objects intended to decorate, advertise, entertain, or inform people about something.

“Display surface area” is defined in Section 15.28.050.

"Fence" and "fencing" mean any barrier or section thereof, other than a wall, designed to delimit a boundary or provide a visual screen.

"Flag" means a piece of fabric of distinctive design that is displayed hanging free from a staff, halyard or building to which it is attached.

"Freestanding sign" means a sign wholly supported from the ground by its own integral structure.

"Frontage" means the full length of a parcel of property that abuts a dedicated street, highway,¹ freeway or a the City-approved vehicular public access easement.

"Government owned sign" means a sign owned by a government agency, but does not include a sign constructed by a third-party with grant funds obtained from a government agency.

"Maintenance" means normal care or servicing needed to keep a sign functional or perpetuate its use, such as cleaning, replacing, or repairing a part made unusable by ordinary wear, and changing light bulbs.

"Natural materials" means metal, wood, stone, brick and rock or any combination thereof.

"Premises" means a lot or number of lots as approved by the community development director.

"Projecting sign" means a sign projecting more than one foot from the wall of a building².

"Public mural" means an original, two-dimensional work of visual art, comprised of paint, ceramic or glass tiles, or tesserae, executed by hand directly upon, or affixed directly to an exterior wall of a building, where the original, two-dimensional work of visual art has been approved by the Oregon City Arts Commission and accepted by the City into its public art collection pursuant to this Chapter. A public mural is not an original work of visual art if it is mechanically reproduced or computer generated and printed on a base that will be attached to the wall, such as, by way of illustration but not limitation, images digitally printed on vinyl.

"Roof sign" means a sign constructed or maintained wholly upon or over the roof of any building with the principal support on the roof structure.

"Sign" means any sign, display message, emblem, figure, painting, drawing, placard, poster, billboard, carving or other thing that is designed, used or intended to convey a message or image and is used to inform or attract the attention of the public, and the term includes the sign structure, display surface and all other component parts of a sign; when dimensions of a sign are specified, the term includes panels and frames; and the term includes both sides of a sign of specified dimensions or display surface area.

"Sign face" means the total area as measured pursuant to Section 15.28.050.

"Sign official" is the person designated by the City Manager to enforce the provisions of this chapter, including the review of permit applications, the interpretation of the provisions of this chapter and the issuance of permits.

"Tenant space" means the portion of a structure occupied by a single commercial lease holder, or an owner-occupied space with its own public entrance from the exterior of the building or through a shared lobby, atrium, mall, or hallway and separated from other tenant spaces by walls.

"Traffic control sign or device" means a sign approved through the right-of-way permit process through the City's Public Works Division, where the sign complies with the City's Street Standards and/or the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). In addition, traffic control sign or device includes signs on private property associated with an approved traffic control plan prepared by a transportation engineer and approved by the City through a Site Plan and Design Review process.

"Undeveloped lot" means a property without a building, business or valid land use approval.

¹ Note that highways and freeways are considered frontages.

² CAT suggested projecting signs should be signs projecting more than four (4) inches.

"Wall sign" means a sign that is attached to the wall of a building and extends no more than twelve inches from a wall.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Definitions

- The following definitions deleted: incidental sign, obsolete sign, temporary sign, and wall.
- New definitions for A-frame sign, air blown sign, ancillary sign, attention flag, banner, business, display, flag, government owned sign, tenant space, and undeveloped lots.
- Minor rewording edits.

15.28.030 Scope of sign regulations.

Scope. All signs shall be constructed and maintained only as provided by this chapter, except for the following³:

1. Signs not visible from either a public right-of-way or property under different ownership, provided such signs shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with applicable law;
2. Signs inside a building, except for strobe lights or floating lights visible from the right-of-way or other private property;
3. Signs carved into or part of materials that are an integral part of a building.
4. Signs attached to, or carried by a person;
5. Signs required by law or legal action;
6. Government owned signs within the right-of-way;
7. Government owned signs within government-designated parks, Metro-designated open space and at stormwater facilities;
8. Public murals as defined in 15.28.090 existing prior to adoption of this code; and
9. Traffic control signs and devices.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Scope of Sign Regulations

- All government owned signs are no longer exempt.
- Items 4-9 are new exemptions.

15.28.040 Permit required.

- A. Permit Required. No sign shall be constructed except as provided by this chapter and a permit has been issued by the sign official. This permit requirement applies to all signs, except those specifically exempt by a provision of this chapter.
- B. The following signs on private property do not require a sign permit.
1. Changes of copy whereby the sign size and material are not changing but the message is changing do not require a sign permit.
 2. Freestanding signs with no more than two faces, the total of which does not exceed six (6) square feet in area per sign face, excluding banners, and subject to the limitations identified for ancillary signs;
 3. A-frame signs, subject to the limitations under Section 15.28.100(I).
 4. Flags (excluding attention flags).
- C. Permit Application. Application for a sign permit shall be made in writing upon forms furnished by the sign official. A permit application fee shall accompany the application. The amount of the fee shall be adopted by resolution of the city commission. The application shall include all plans and

³ The Community Advisory team suggested signs painted on the sides of buildings to be exempt but did not vote to make a recommendation on the matter.

information necessary to establish that the proposed sign complies with all applicable requirements of this chapter and applicable buildings, structural and life safety codes. The permit shall be valid if the sign is constructed in compliance with the city code, and to the specifications described in the approved sign permit. Any permit issued under this chapter shall be void if no substantial physical action be taken, in accordance with any conditions of the permit and the applicable requirements of this chapter, within ninety days following the date of its issuance, excluding appeals and for LUBA or judicial review. Any permit issued under this chapter shall remain in effect as long as the sign is constructed in compliance with any permit conditions and all applicable provisions of this chapter. If an applicant seeks to have the city treat its property as a premise for purposes of the sign code, then the application shall explain how the property meets the definition of premises in Section 15.28.020.

- D. Appeals. Any party aggrieved by a decision of the sign official may appeal the decision to the Planning Commission. Any such appeal shall be in writing and be received by the city recorder no later than fourteen days after the date the challenged decision is final. The Planning Commission or City Commission may initiate an appeal on its own motion within the fourteen-day period. The appropriate appeal fee established by resolution of the city commission shall accompany the appeal. Proceedings before the planning commission shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 17.50 of this code, including the provisions relating to city commission review of planning commission decisions involving conditional use permits.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Permit Required

- Minor edits, clarifications and reorganizations.
- Clarification of signs that do not require a permit.
- Removal of section D which required all existing signs without permits to obtain a permit within 120 days of adoption of the regulations.

15.28.050 Measuring Sign Face

- A. The following criteria shall be used for the purpose of determining the boundaries of a sign face:
1. Sign area includes the area within a perimeter enclosing the limits of lettering, writing, representation, emblem, figure, character and lighted surface, but excluding essential sign structure, foundations or supports. Where a sign is of a three-dimensional, round, or irregular solid shape, the largest cross-section shall be used in a flat projection for the purpose of determining sign face.
 2. When signs are constructed in multiple separate pieces the sign face is calculated by measuring the area within a perimeter enclosing the limits of lettering, writing, representation, emblem, figure, character and light surface, but excluding essential sign structure, foundations or support on all pieces collectively.
- B. The height of a sign above grade is measured from the average level of the grade below the sign to the topmost point of the sign including any supporting structure.
- C. Clearance is measured from the average grade below the sign to the lowermost point of the sign.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Measuring the Boundaries of a Sign

- Entire section is new.

15.28.060 Signs in Residential Zones

This standard applies to the following zoning designations: “R-10” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-8” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-6” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-5” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-3.5” Dwelling District, and “R-2” Multi-Family Dwelling District.

- A. Wall Sign. The following standards apply to wall signs in residential zones:
1. One wall sign is allowed for each property frontage (with a maximum of three (3)). A wall sign is prohibited if there is a freestanding sign along the same property frontage, except in the “R-2” Multi-Family Dwelling District.
 2. Residentially zoned property may have a wall sign with a maximum area of twelve (12) square feet and maximum length of five (5) linear feet, except in the “R-2” Multi-Family Dwelling District where wall signs may have a maximum area of twenty (20) square feet and maximum length of five (5) linear feet.
 3. At least fifty percent (50%) of the wall sign shall be constructed of natural materials.
 4. If illuminated, the source of illumination for all signs within residential districts shall be external to the sign and directed or shielded so as to not shine directly onto any neighboring structure.
- B. Freestanding Sign: The following standards apply to freestanding signs in residential zones:
1. Residentially zoned property may have one freestanding sign if there is no wall sign on the same frontage except in the “R-2” Multi-Family Dwelling District where one freestanding sign for each property frontage (with a maximum of three (3)) is allowed.
 2. The freestanding sign may have a maximum area of twelve (12)⁴ square feet, maximum length of five (5) linear feet and a maximum height of five (5) feet above grade, except in the “R-2” Multi-Family Dwelling District where freestanding signs may have a maximum area of twenty (20) square feet in size, maximum length of ten (10) linear feet, and maximum height of five (5) feet above grade.
 3. At least fifty percent (50%) of the freestanding sign shall be constructed of natural materials.
 4. If illuminated, the source of illumination for all signs within residential districts shall be external to the sign and directed or shielded so as to not shine directly onto any neighboring structure.
- C. Ancillary Signs.⁵ The following standard applies to ancillary signs in residential zones.
1. A total of two (2) ancillary signs are allowed per property.
 2. Banners are prohibited in residential zones unless approved under Section 15.28.070.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Signs in Residential Zones.

- Delete OCMC 15.28.070.B.6 requiring that wall and freestanding signs will “be set back from the street as determined by the sign official, but not more than ten feet from the street right-of-way”.
- Reduce the size of wall signs from twenty (20) square feet to twelve (12) square feet for properties in zones other than in the “R-2” Multifamily dwelling district.
- Allow portable signs, A-frame signs, sandwich boards, tent signs up to twelve (12) square feet, six (6) square feet per sign face and three (3) feet in height.
- Reduce maximum wall sign length from 10 to 5 feet.
- Remove the maximum five (5) foot height requirement for wall signs.
- The maximum size for freestanding signs is reduced from twenty (20) square feet to twelve (12) square feet for residential zones other than the “R-2” Multi-family dwelling district.
- The maximum length for freestanding signs is reduced from 10 to 5 feet for residential zones other than the “R-2” Multi-family dwelling district.
- For residential zones other than the “R-2” Multi-family dwelling district, the number of freestanding signs is changed from one freestanding or wall sign for each property frontage (with a maximum of three (3)) to a maximum of one freestanding sign.

⁴ CAT did not suggest a reduction in the size of freestanding signs for residential property.

⁵ The number of ancillary signs allowed was a split decision by the Sign Code Community Advisory Team.

- For properties within the “R-2” Multi-family dwelling district, the number of freestanding signs is changed from one freestanding or wall sign for each property frontage (with a maximum of three (3)) to allow one wall and freestanding sign for each property frontage (with a maximum of six (6)).
- The number of ancillary signs is now specified. Previously, a property would have been allowed more signs that did not require a permit.

15.28.070 Signs for Conditional Uses in Residential Zones

This standard applies to all conditional uses within a residential zoning district (“R-10” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-8” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-6” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-5” Single-Family Dwelling District, “R-3.5” Dwelling District, and “R-2” Multi-Family Dwelling District) unless otherwise limited in the Conditional Use approval.

- A. Wall Sign. The following standards apply to wall signs for conditional uses in residential zones:
 1. One (1) wall sign per frontage is allowed, not to exceed a maximum of three wall signs.
 2. A wall sign may have a maximum area of thirty-two (32) square feet and maximum length of ten (10) linear feet.
 3. At least fifty percent (50%) of the wall sign shall be constructed of natural materials.
 4. If illuminated, the source of illumination shall be external to the sign and directed or shielded so as to not shine directly onto any neighboring structure.⁶
- B. Freestanding Sign. The following standards apply to freestanding signs for conditional uses in residential zones:
 1. One (1) free-standing sign per lot is allowed.
 2. The sign may have a maximum area of thirty-two (32) square feet, maximum length of ten (10) linear feet, and maximum height of fifteen (15) feet above grade.
 3. At least fifty percent (50%) of the freestanding sign shall be constructed of natural materials.
 4. If illuminated, the source of illumination shall be external to the sign and directed or shielded so as to not shine directly onto any neighboring structure.⁷
- C. Ancillary Signs⁸. The following standards apply to ancillary signs for conditional uses in residential zones.
 1. A total of two (2) ancillary signs (including banners) are allowed per property.
 2. Additional standards for banners
 - a. For a single property, banners may be in place for up to thirty (30) days, up to twice per year.⁹
 - b. Banners shall be securely placed against a building wall and may not project from the wall.
 - c. Banners shall comply with the wall sign size requirements and shall not be more than six (6) feet long and four (4) feet in height.
 - d. Banners are prohibited within an historic district and on any property designated as a historic landmark.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Signs for Conditional Uses in Residential Zones

- Increase the height of freestanding signs from eight (8) feet to fifteen (15) feet.
- Remove the maximum height of eight (8) feet requirement for wall signs.

⁶ The Community Advisory Team was split as to if electronic message centers or internally lit signs should be allowed for conditional uses and if a conditional use would be required to allow the sign type.

⁷ The Community Advisory Team was split as to if electronic message centers or internally lit signs should be allowed for conditional uses and if a conditional use would be required to allow the sign type.

⁸ The number of ancillary signs allowed was a split decision by the Sign Code Community Advisory Team.

⁹ Members were split on this element of the recommendation.

- Allowing portable signs, A-frame signs, sandwich boards, tent signs up to twelve (12) square feet, six (6) square feet per sign face and three (3) feet in height.
- The number of ancillary signs is now specified. Previously, a property would have been allowed more signs that do not require a permit.
- Allow banners except for within a historic district and on any property designated as a historic landmark.

15.28.080 Signs in Office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones

The following standards apply to signs in office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones which are not identified in 15.28.060 or 15.28.070, unless otherwise provided by this code.

A. Wall Signs. The following standard applies to wall signs in office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones:

1. The number of wall signs is unlimited provided the total combined display surface area of wall signs and projecting signs is no larger than one (1) square foot per each lineal foot of the wall length of the tenant space on which the sign is constructed. Signs on structures such as awnings, canopies, false fronts and wall extensions that do not extend more than one (1) foot from the structure are considered wall signs.¹⁰
2. Each ground floor tenant space may have a minimum sign area of twenty (20) square feet, regardless of the limitation in subsection A.1 above.¹¹

B. Freestanding signs. The following standards apply to freestanding signs in office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones:

1. One freestanding sign¹² is allowed for each street frontage. On arterial streets, if a frontage exceeds a length of six hundred (600) linear feet a second freestanding sign is allowed¹³. In all cases, no freestanding sign shall be permitted on the same frontage where there is a projecting or roof sign.
2. Freestanding signs on the same property shall be separated by a minimum of fifty (50) feet distance.
3. Maximum display surface area:
 - a. Where the street frontage is less than fifty (50) feet in length, the maximum display surface area shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet, with twenty-five square (25) feet maximum area per sign face.
 - b. Where the street frontage is greater than fifty (50) feet but less than two hundred (200) feet in length, surface display area shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet, with fifty (50) square feet maximum area per sign face.
 - c. Where the street frontage is two hundred (200) feet or greater in length, the surface display area shall not exceed three hundred (300) square feet, with a maximum area of one hundred fifty (150) square feet per sign face.
 - d. In no case shall any sign have a surface display area in excess of three hundred (300) square feet.
4. The signs shall not project over the right-of-way and a minimum clearance of ten (10) feet above grade shall be maintained over pedestrian or vehicular areas, and a minimum clearance fourteen (14) feet above grade over areas of truck access.

¹⁰ The Community Advisory Team suggested wall signs do not project from the building face no more than 4 inches.

¹¹ The Community Advisory Team suggested a minimum.

¹² The CAT suggested allowing an additional sign of any type for each freestanding sign allowed but not constructed.

¹³ Note that a second freestanding sign is allowed for large frontages on arterial roads.

5. The greatest horizontal dimension shall not exceed twenty (20) linear feet and the height shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet above grade, or thirty (30) feet above grade if the frontage is more than two hundred (200) feet in length.
- C. Incidental freestanding signs. The following standards apply to incidental signs in office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones:
1. One incidental freestanding sign is allowed for each street frontage. No incidental freestanding sign face shall exceed an area of eight (8) square feet with a maximum surface display area of sixteen (16) square feet.
 2. Incidental freestanding signs shall not project over the right-of-way and a minimum clearance of ten (10) feet above grade shall be maintained over pedestrian or vehicular areas, fourteen (14) feet above grade over areas of truck access.
 3. The height shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet above grade.
- D. Roof signs. The following standards apply to roof signs in office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones:
1. One roof sign is permitted for each frontage if there is no projecting sign or free-standing sign along the frontage.
 2. Maximum display surface area:
 - a. Where the street frontage is less than fifty (50) feet, the maximum display surface area shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet, with twenty-five (25) square feet maximum area per sign face.
 - b. Where the street frontage is greater than fifty (50) feet but less than two-hundred (200) feet, surface display area shall not exceed one-hundred (100) square feet, with fifty (50) square feet maximum area per sign face.
 - c. Where the street frontage is two hundred (200) feet or greater, the surface display area shall not exceed an area of three hundred (300) square feet, with a maximum area of one hundred fifty (150) square feet per sign face.
 - d. In no case shall any sign have a surface display area in excess of three hundred (300) square feet.
 3. The roof signs shall not project over the right-of-way and a minimum clearance of ten (10) feet above grade shall be maintained over pedestrian or vehicular areas, fourteen (14) feet above grade over areas of truck access.
 4. The horizontal dimension shall not exceed twenty (20) feet and the vertical dimension may not exceed ten (10) feet.
 5. Skirting is required to obscure exposed hardware used to attach the sign to the roof, as viewed from the adjacent street level perspective.
- E. Projecting signs. The following standards apply to projecting signs in office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones:
1. One projecting sign is allowed for each tenant space if there is not a freestanding or roof sign on the same frontage.
 2. The total combined display surface area of projecting signs and wall signs is no larger than one (1) square foot per each lineal foot of the wall length of the tenant space on which the sign is constructed.
 3. Each ground floor tenant space may have a minimum sign area of twenty (20) square feet, regardless of the limitation in subsection E.2 above.¹⁴

¹⁴ The Community Advisory Team suggested a minimum.

4. The maximum projection from a building wall shall be six (6) feet and shall not project within two (2) feet of the curb line. The maximum projection above the wall on which the sign is constructed shall be one (1) foot, and the visible supporting structure shall be constructed of natural materials.
 5. A minimum clearance of ten (10) feet above grade shall be maintained over pedestrian or vehicular areas, fourteen (14) feet above grade over areas of truck access.
- F. Ancillary Signs¹⁵. The following standards apply to ancillary signs in office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones.
1. A total of two (2) ancillary signs (including banners) are allowed per property.
 2. Additional standards for banners
 - a. A total of two (2) ancillary signs are allowed per property.
 - b. For a single property, banners may be in place for up to thirty (30) days, up to twice per year¹⁶
 - c. Banners shall be securely placed against a building wall and may not project from the wall.
 - d. Banners shall comply with the wall sign size requirements and shall not be more than six (6) linear feet long and four (4) feet in height.
 - e. Banners are prohibited within a historic district and on any property designated as a historic landmark.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Signs in Office, commercial, mixed use and industrial zones

- Wall signs are measured using the tenant space, and not using the entire building wall. The size of wall signs is unlimited so long as the total combined display surface area of wall signs and projecting signs is no larger than one (1) square foot for each lineal foot of the wall length of the tenant space on which the sign is constructed. The previous standard allowed two (2) square feet of signage for each lineal foot of a wall.
- Signs on other project structures such as awnings, canopies, false fronts and wall extensions which do not extend more than a foot are considered wall signs.
- Increase the number of freestanding signs from one (1) per frontage from two (2) for frontages with six hundred (600) lineal feet or more on arterial streets.
- Multiple free-standing signs on the same frontage are required to be separated by fifty (50) feet. Previously all signs had to be separated by fifty (50) feet, regardless of frontage.
- Change the number of roof signs from one per premises (if there is no projecting sign or free-standing sign along the frontage) to one per frontage (if there is no projecting sign or free-standing sign along the frontage).
- Remove the requirements for civil and structural engineers and fire marshal approvals, as it is implemented by the Building Division upon review of building permits.
- The height for roof signs is changed from a maximum of twenty-five feet above grade, plus five feet for each two hundred feet, or portion thereof, frontage in excess of two hundred feet frontage (in no event shall any sign exceed thirty feet (30) in height) to a vertical maximum of ten (10) feet.
- Reduce the maximum horizontal dimension for roof signs from twenty (20) to ten (10) feet.
- Skirting is required around the base of roof signs.
- Remove the twenty (20) foot minimum distance between projecting signs.
- Increase the dimensions for projecting signs from a maximum size of sixteen (16) square feet per sign face, with total area of all faces not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet to a maximum of

¹⁵ The number of ancillary signs allowed was a split decision by the Sign Code Community Advisory Team.

¹⁶ Members were split on this element of the recommendation.

twenty-four (24) square feet per sign face, with total area of all faces not to exceed forty-eight (48) square feet.

- The maximum projection from a building wall for projecting signs is increased from four (4) feet to six (6) feet. Eliminate the four (4) foot maximum vertical dimension of a projecting sign.
- The supporting structure for projecting signs shall be constructed of natural materials.
- Clarify standards for signs on structures including clearance requirements of eight (8) feet.
- Incidental signs previously were allowed to be for wall or freestanding and are now only applicable to freestanding and are renamed incidental freestanding signs. Reduce the size limitations from a maximum sixteen (16) square feet with a maximum sign face size of eight (8) square feet. Remove the maximum horizontal dimension of twenty (20) feet. Reduce the maximum height from 25 feet above grade, plus five (5) feet for each two-hundred (200) feet, or portion thereof, frontage in excess of two-hundred (200) feet (not to exceed thirty (30) feet) to fifteen (15) feet.
- Allow portable signs, A-frame signs, sandwich boards, tent signs up to twelve (12) square feet, six (6) square feet per sign face and up to three (3) feet in height.
- Allow temporary banners to be attached to building walls outside of historic districts or historic landmarks.
- The number of ancillary signs is now specified. Previously, a property would have been allowed more signs that do not require a permit.

15.28.090 Public Murals

- A. Public Mural Program Intent and Purpose.** The intent and purpose of this section is to encourage the production of public murals for acquisition by the City. Public murals are a medium of expression which serves the public interest in unique ways, including, but not limited to: enhancing the aesthetics of the City; providing avenues for original artistic expression in the City; providing public edification through access to original works of public art; encouraging community participation in the creation of original works of art; and reducing the incidence of graffiti and other crime.
- B. Approval Process.** No person shall commence creation of any public mural without first obtaining approval from the Oregon City Arts Commission, and agreeing to donate the public mural to the City's public art collection. Murals that are created without approval from the Oregon City Arts Commission that are not otherwise exempt pursuant to this chapter or are inconsistent with the conditions of approval from the Oregon City Arts Commission shall not be deemed public murals.
- C. Criteria for Public Murals.** The following criteria shall be met for public murals:
1. Public murals shall remain in place, without alterations, for a period of not less than five years, except as may be specified by the Oregon City Arts Commission in the conditions of approval.
 2. All public murals on locally designated historic structures shall be approved by the Historic Review Board prior to installation.
 3. No public murals shall be allowed on single family dwellings, duplexes, or multi-family dwellings. As used in this subsection, single family dwellings, duplexes, or multi-family dwellings do not include mixed-use buildings which contain a single family dwelling, duplex, or multi-family dwellings.
 4. No part of the public mural shall exceed the height of the structure to which it is tiled, painted, or affixed.
 5. No part of the public mural shall be placed over the exterior surface of any opening of a building, including its windows, doors, and vents.
 6. No public mural may contain electrical components, three dimensional structural elements; employ electrical lights as part of the image, moving structural elements, flashing or sequential lighting, interior lighting elements, any automated method that causes movement, or any method that causes periodic changes in the appearance, image or message of the public mural.

7. Public murals shall utilize media that ensures longevity and durability, and structural and surface stability.
 8. Public murals shall be located in a manner that is accessible to the public.
 9. The artist has a strong concept and has demonstrated craftsmanship.
 10. The proposal has architectural, geographical, socio-cultural and historical relevance.
 11. The proposal is unique.
 12. The proposed design is feasible in regards to budget, timeline and experience.
 13. The public mural will last a minimum of five years, resistance to vandalism and weather; commitment to repair mural surface as necessary before painting and to use acceptable graffiti/UV coating, as needed, on finished mural.
 14. The scale is appropriate to the structure and surrounding neighborhoods.
 15. The approval and acceptance of each public mural shall be contingent upon the conveyance of a public mural easement to the City from the owner of the building upon which the mural will be located, in a form approved by the City Attorney. The terms of the easement shall grant the right to create the public mural on the wall of the building and provide that the person granting the easement will maintain and restore the public mural in its original condition for the period of the easement, and state that upon termination of the easement, the mural shall be removed and the building restored to its prior condition.
- D. Approval Process. Public murals shall be approved by the Oregon City Arts Commission in a Type III.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Public Murals

- Entire section is new.

15.28.100 Signs within the Right-of-Way

This standard applies to all signage within the City of Oregon City right-of-way, except signs exempted from this section under Section 15.28.030.

A. Signs on the Ground within the Right-of-Way

1. Number of signs permitted.
 - a. One (1) A-frame sign within the right-of-way per property frontage.¹⁷
 - b. Approved traffic control signs or devices do not count towards the number of signs permitted within the right-of-way. However, signs placed within the right-of-way shall not obstruct traffic control signs or devices.
2. Material, design and size standards:
 - a. The sign frame shall be wood, plastic or metal.
 - b. The sign shall be an A-frame sandwich design.
 - c. The sign may not be illuminated.
 - d. Maximum width: twenty-eight (28) inches wide
 - e. Maximum depth: two (2) feet
 - f. Maximum height: three (3) feet tall
 - g. Maximum size: six (6) square feet per sign face
3. Placement standards.

¹⁷ The Community Advisory Team does not believe this is fair for multi-tenant properties and suggested it is changed to allow one per adjacent business or entrance. Staff believes one sign per frontage is appropriate given the number of potential signs that may be placed within the right-of-way if a different standard is used and the number and type of signage which may be placed on adjacent private property.

- a. The sign shall be entirely outside automobile or bicycle travel lanes and on-street parking areas.
 - b. For signs placed within the right-of-way with an adjacent sidewalk:
 - i. The sign shall be placed within six (6) inches of the face of the curb.
 - ii. Four (4) feet of clearance width shall be retained on the sidewalk.
 - c. For signs placed in the right-of-way without an adjacent sidewalk:
 - i. The sign shall be located outside of any street pavement and may not be located closer than four (4) feet from the travel lane, turning lane, shoulder, parking lane or bicycle lane.
 - d. Signs placed in the right-of-way shall remain portable and shall not be attached or anchored in any manner to trees or public property including, but not limited, to utility or light poles, parking meters, traffic control signs, the ground, or pavement.
 - e. Signs shall not be placed in parking spaces, pedestrian pathways, or bicycle paths, street corners, transit stop areas, ADA accessible curb ramps, ADA accessible parking spaces, at building exits or fire escapes, or any portion of the street (travel lanes, shoulder, bike lanes, medians, traffic islands, and parking areas). The sign may not obstruct pedestrian or ADA access from the sidewalk to transit stop areas, designated ADA accessible parking spaces, ADA accessible ramps; or building exits including fire escapes. Signs may not impede or hinder the vision of drivers or bicyclists. The sign shall be located entirely outside of the area of a right-of-way corner that is between the curb and the lines created by extending the property line to the curb face.
4. Hours of Sign Placement.
- a. For signs not within residential zoning designations: Signs may be within the right-of-way for a maximum of twelve (12) hours per day¹⁸.
 - b. For signs within residential zoning designations: The signs may be displayed on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday between 12:00 pm and 8:00 pm daily; and from 6:00 am to 1:00 pm on Tuesday.

B. Cross Street Banners

Temporary banners which extend over a roadway shall be permitted in the right-of-way upon issuance of a permit in accordance the following standards:

- 1. Location.
 - a. A single, two-sided cross street banner at ODOT facilities at Highway 99E/Pedestrian Bridge; and
 - b. A single, one-sided cross street banner at PGE power poles #412 and #413 on Molalla Avenue at Beverly Drive.
- 2. Cross street banner display periods shall not exceed twenty-one (21) consecutive days in duration and no more than three (3) times in any twelve (12) month period. Cross street banner(s) shall not be installed or removed on any dates other than those identified on the approved permit.
- 3. Cross street banner construction shall be in accordance with the banner construction standards adopted by the Public Works Division.

¹⁸ The Community Advisory Team suggested changing this to allow the sign in the right-of-way during business hours. This may be difficult for signs not associated with a business such as political signs.

4. Cross street banner(s) shall have 20 feet minimum clearance between the bottom of the banner and the roadway surface and clearance shall be maintained at all times. Banners shall not:
 - a. Prevent the driver of a motor vehicle from having a clear and unobstructed view of official traffic control devices and approaching or merging traffic;
 - b. Have any lighting, unless such lighting is shielded to prevent light from being directed at the roads/highway or is of such low intensity or brilliance as not to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of a motor vehicle; or
 - c. Be a traffic hazard.
- C. Who May Place the Sign
 1. Permits are approved on a first come first served basis.
 2. Except for cross street banners, if there is a business license associated with the person or company owning the sign, the business license location shall be directly abutting the location where the sign within the right-of-way is proposed. Based on the proposed location of the sign, the approval of the abutting property owner is required.¹⁹
- D. Right-of-Way Sign Permit Process
 1. An annual permit is required for signs on the ground within the right-of-way²⁰. A permit is required each time a cross street banner is installed.
 2. An approval sticker shall be placed on each sign within the right-of-way to easily distinguish the approved signs²¹.
 3. If the sign is owned by a business, the business shall have a valid business license, if applicable as determined under the criteria set forth in Oregon City Municipal Code Chapter 5.04²².
 4. The City Commission shall establish permit fees for signs located within the right-of-way.
 5. The applicant shall provide a certificate of insurance for general liability naming the City of Oregon City, its officers, agents, and employees, as additional insured's for the sign placement and include any other facility owners if applicable (e.g., State of Oregon (ODOT) and PGE).
 6. Applicant shall comply with and obtain any permits issued by any other applicable agency.
- E. Removal of signs within the right-of-way.
 1. Existing signs that do not comply with these standards or have not obtained a valid permit may be removed.
 2. The City Engineer may require signs to be modified, moved or removed if streets are widened or other improvements are made in the right-of-way that result in conditions where the sign placement will not comply with the above standards. The modification, moving or removing will be at the owner's expense.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Signs With the Right-of-Way

- This entire section is new

15.28.110 Prohibited Signs

It is unlawful for the following signs to be constructed or maintained except as otherwise provided in this chapter:

¹⁹ The Community Advisory Team suggested requiring approval of the adjacent property owner.

²⁰ The City will create a form and approve over the counter.

²¹ The Community Advisory Team suggested that permits should not be required in residential and mixed-use zones.

²² Political signs, etc may not require a business.

- A. A sign that interferes in any way with a traffic control sign or device or prevents clear and unobstructed views of traffic control signs or devices or approaching or merging traffic or does not comply with chapter 10.32 of the Oregon City Municipal Code.
- B. A sign that contains, includes or is illuminated by any flashing or revolving, rotating or moving light or moves or has any animated or moving parts which move or rotate or change more than once (1) per day²³, except as otherwise allowed within this code.
- C. A sign with lighting that is not effectively shielded to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the main traveled right-of-way of a state highway, unless the lighting is of such low intensity or brilliance that it does not cause glare or impair the vision of the driver of a motor vehicle or otherwise interfere with the operations thereof.
- D. A sign located upon a tree, or painted or drawn upon a natural feature.
- E. A sign that obstructs free ingress to or egress from any door, window or fire escape, alley, drive or fire lane, or is attached to a fire escape.
- F. Any sign with an area larger than twelve (12) square feet, six (6) square feet per sign face on an undeveloped lot or parcel of property.
- G. A sign not otherwise in compliance with any provision of this code, Oregon law or the terms and conditions of any valid sign permit issued under this chapter.
- H. Attention flags.
- I. A-frame signs with an area larger than twelve (12) square feet, six (6) square feet per sign face or taller than three (3) feet.
- J. Air blown signs.
- K. Billboards.²⁴
- L. Signs on fences or fencing.²⁵
- M. Banners unless otherwise allowed by this chapter.
- N. Abandoned signs.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Prohibited Signs

- The following are added as prohibited: attention flags, A-frame signs with an area larger than six (6) square feet per sign face or taller than three (3) feet, air blown signs, and abandoned signs.
- The following are removed from prohibited signs: obsolete sign, portable signs, A-frame signs, sandwich boards, tent signs, streamers, strings of lights, balloons, hulas, banners or pennants, excepting traditional holiday decorations, A sign erected or maintained on public property or within the public right-of-way without permission of the public body having jurisdiction, a sign not able to withstand a wind pressure of twenty pounds per square foot of exposed surface, or is insecurely erected, or is constructed so as to constitute a fire hazard, and a sign not maintained in a safe, neat, clean and attractive condition and in good repair.
- The size of signs on undeveloped lots or properties is increased from four (4) square feet to (12) square feet, six (6) square feet per sign face on an undeveloped lot or parcel of property.

15.28.120 Nonconforming Signs

²³ The Community Advisory Team was split on the minimum length of time which a message had to be displayed before it could change. Since no clear direction was provided staff defaulted to our current policy.

²⁴ This was a split issue by the Community Advisory Team. Staff chose to default to our existing code which prohibits billboards since a clear direction was not provided.

²⁵ The Community Advisory Team had a split decision on this. Staff defaulted to our current code.

Signs that were lawfully constructed and otherwise lawfully existing but no longer comply with this code are allowed to remain until removed. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prevent the maintenance of any sign, or changes of sign copy on a sign.

- a. No additions or enlargements may be made to a nonconforming sign except those additions or enlargements that are required by law.
- b. A sign that is moved, replaced, or structurally altered shall be brought into conformance with this chapter, except that nonconforming signs may be reconstructed if required to be moved for construction or repair of public works or public utilities and the sign reconstruction is completed within ninety days after the completion of the public works or public utility construction or repair.
- c. Abandoned signs shall not be deemed nonconforming signs. No nonconforming sign shall be permitted to remain unless properly repaired and maintained as provided in this chapter. A sign maintained in violation of this provision shall be removed as provided in this chapter. Any nonconforming sign that is determined by the building official to be an unsafe sign shall be removed as provided in this chapter. Any nonconforming sign that is determined to be an abandoned sign shall be removed as provided in this chapter.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Nonconforming Signs

- Existing signs are allowed to remain unless removed by the owner. The previous code included an amortization period.

15.28.130 Variances.

- A. Grounds for Variance. Upon application by an applicant, the planning commission may grant a specific variance from provisions of this chapter provided all of the following circumstances exist:
 1. That the variance from the requirements is not likely to cause substantial damage to adjacent properties by reducing light, air, safe access or other desirable or necessary qualities otherwise protected by this title;
 2. That the request is the minimum variance that would alleviate the hardship;
 3. Granting the variance will equal or exceed the purpose of the regulation to be modified;
 4. Any impacts resulting from the adjustment are mitigated;
 5. No practical alternatives have been identified which would accomplish the same purpose and not require a variance; and
 6. The variance conforms to the comprehensive plan and the intent of the ordinance being varied.
- B. Variance Fee. At the time of application for variance from the provisions of this chapter, the applicant shall pay a fee in accordance with the fee schedule established and amended from time to time by the city commission and on file with the city recorder.
- C. Procedure. A variance application shall be treated in the manner provided by Chapter 17.50 of this code with respect to zoning variances.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Variances

- The variance criteria are replaced with the variance criteria from OCMC 17.60.

15.28.140 Violation—Penalty.

In addition to any other provisions hereof, it is unlawful for any person to maintain a sign or advertising structure in violation of the provisions of this chapter. Violation of any provision of this chapter is subject to the code enforcement procedures of Chapters 1.16, 1.20, 1.24.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Violation

- No changes to this section are made other than renumbering the title.

15.28.150 Conflict and severability

In the event any provision herein is found to be in conflict with any zoning, building, fire safety, health or other code provisions of the city, the provision which establishes the higher standard for the promotion and protection of the health, safety and welfare of the people shall prevail.

A finding by a court of competent jurisdiction that any portion of this chapter is invalid shall not invalidate the remaining portions. A permit issued pursuant to this chapter does not grant any authority to violate any other law or regulation that may apply.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Code – Conflict and Severability

- No changes to this section are made other than renumbering the title.

DRAFT

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

Sections:

[15.28.010 Purpose and scope.](#)

[15.28.020 Definitions.](#)

[15.28.030 Permit required.](#)

[15.28.040 Variances.](#)

[15.28.050 Prohibited signs.](#)

[15.28.060 Signs not requiring a permit.](#)

[15.28.070 Signs in residential zones.](#)

[15.28.075 Signs for listed conditional uses in residential zones.](#)

[15.28.080 Signs in office, commercial and industrial zones.](#)

[15.28.090 Nonconforming signs and their removal.](#)

[15.28.100 Conflict and severability.](#)

[15.28.110 Violation—Penalty.](#)

15.28.010 Purpose and scope.

This chapter regulates the erection placement and maintenance of signs to protect and enhance public health, safety, welfare and property, more specifically to:

A. Purpose.

1. Allow those signs compatible with the character and uses allowed in the zoning district in which they are located;
2. Maintain the effectiveness of traffic signs;
3. Prohibit certain signs or portions thereof, which conflict with the safe movement of people and emergency services, constitute a public nuisance or hazard, are of unsafe construction, or which demand attention by their dominating size or appearance of motion;
4. Maintain and enhance the scenic and other aesthetic qualities of the city.

B. Scope. All signs, including sign structures and display areas or building walls with lettering on them shall be erected and maintained only as provided by this chapter, except for the following:

1. Signs not visible from either a public right-of-way or property of different ownership, provided such signs shall be erected and maintained in accordance with applicable law;
2. Signs owned and maintained by governmental agencies;
3. Signs lawfully erected in the public right-of-way in accordance with applicable state and local laws and regulations;
4. Signs inside a building, except for strobe lights or floating lights visible from a public right-of-way, private road or other private property; and

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

5. Signs carved into or part of materials which are an integral part of a building.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.020 Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter:

"Abandoned sign" means a sign that does not have copy on the display surface for a period of six months or more, including an obsolete sign.

"Billboard" means a sign with a display surface area of three hundred square feet or more.

"Display surface area" means the total area of a sign that is available for displaying advertising or an informational message, subject to the provisions of this chapter.

"Erect" or "erected" means to construct, build, assemble, alter, place, affix, attach, create, recreate, paint, draw or in any way bring into being or establish.

"Free-standing sign" means a sign supported from the ground by its own structure.

"Fence" and "fencing" mean any barrier or section thereof, other than a wall, designed to delimit a boundary or provide a visual screen.

"Frontage" means the continuous distance along one street right-of-way line of one premises, provided such street is improved for public travel.

"Grade" means the level of the nearest sidewalk or road pavement.

"Incidental sign" means a sign identifying or advertising associated goods, products, services or facilities available on the premises, including but not limited to, trading stamps, credit cards accepted, brand names or price signs.

"Maintain," "maintained" or "maintaining" means activities, such as upkeep and repair of signs or sign structures and the replacement of sign messages or advertisement displayed on a sign, and an activity by which a sign or sign structure are permitted to exist.

"Natural materials" means wood, stone, brick and rock or any combination thereof.

"Obsolete sign" means a sign that calls attention to a business or other activity or a profession, commodity, product, service or entertainment no longer carried on, produced, sold or offered.

"Premises" means a lot or number of lots on which are situated a business, or a building or group of buildings designed as a unit.

"Projecting sign" means a sign projecting more than one foot from the wall of a building.

"Roof sign" means a sign erected or maintained wholly upon or over the roof of any building with the principal support on the roof structure.

"Sign" means any sign, display message, emblem, device, figure, painting, drawing, placard, poster, billboard or other thing that is designed, used or intended for advertising purposes or to inform or attract the attention of the public, and the term includes the sign structure, display surface and all other component parts of a sign; when dimensions of a sign are specified, the term includes panels and frames; and the term includes both sides of a sign of specified dimensions or display surface area.

"Sign face" means the total of display surface area visible from one side of a sign.

"Sign official" is the person designated by the city manager to enforce the provisions of this chapter, including the review of permit applications, the interpretation of the provisions of this chapter and the issuance of permits.

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

"Temporary sign" means a sign that will become obsolete after the occurrence of an event or series of events. Temporary signs include, but are not limited to, for sale and lease signs, garage sale signs and political campaign signs.

"Traffic control sign or device" means an official route marker, guide sign, warning sign or sign directing or regulating traffic or pedestrians which has been erected by or under order of the city of Oregon City, the state or federal governments.

"Wall" means a masonry structure.

"Wall sign" means a sign erected on a wall.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.030 Permit required.

- A. Permit Required. No sign shall be erected or maintained except as provided by this chapter and a permit has been issued by the sign official. This permit requirement applies to all signs, except those specifically exempt by a provision of this chapter and signs existing on the date of adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter which shall be subject to subsection D of this section.
- B. Permit Application. Application for a sign permit shall be made in writing upon forms furnished by the sign official. A permit application fee shall accompany the application for it to be processed by the city. The amount of the fee shall be proportionate to the value of the sign proposed and shall be calculated according to a permit fee schedule adopted by resolution of the city commission.

The application shall include all plans and information necessary to establish that the proposed sign complies with all applicable requirements of this chapter and applicable buildings, structural and life safety codes. The permit shall be valid if the sign is erected and maintained in compliance with city code, and the applicant did not misrepresent or falsify any information supplied in the application. Any permit issued under this chapter shall be void if no substantial physical action be taken, in accordance with any conditions of the permit and the applicable requirements of this chapter, within ninety days following the date of its issuance. Any permit issued under this chapter shall remain in effect as long as the sign is maintained in compliance with any permit conditions and all applicable provisions of this chapter.

- C. Appeals. Any person aggrieved by a decision of the sign official may appeal the decision to the planning commission. Any such appeal shall be in writing and be received by the city recorder no later than ten days after the date the challenged is final. The appropriate appeal fee established by resolution of the city commission shall accompany the appeal. Proceedings before the planning commission shall comply with the provisions of [Chapter 17.50](#) of this code, including the provisions relating to city commission review of planning commission decisions involving conditional use permits.
- D. Permits for Signs Existing on the Effective Date of These Regulations. Signs existing on the effective date of these regulations shall also be required to obtain a permit within one hundred twenty days of the date these regulations become effective. No fee shall be charged for such permit and the sign official shall, within sixty days of the effective date of these regulations, give written notice of the requirement for permits and shall provide permit forms on request. Any such existing sign for which a permit has not been obtained within one hundred twenty days of the effective date of these regulations shall be deemed an unlawful use.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.040 Variances.

- A. Grounds for Variance. Upon application by an applicant, the planning commission may grant a specific variance from provisions of this chapter provided all of the following circumstances exist:

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

1. Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances apply to the property that do not apply generally to other properties in the same area or vicinity. Such conditions may be the result of an unusual location or orientation of the applicant's building, topography, vegetation or other circumstance over which the applicant has no control;
 2. The variance is necessary for the preservation of a right of the applicant substantially the same as is possessed by the owners of other property in the area or vicinity;
 3. The authorization of the requested variance will not be materially detrimental to, or conflict with, the purposes of this chapter or be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the area or vicinity, or the public way, in which the property is located; and
 4. The variance requested is the minimum variance necessary, to alleviate the identified hardship.
- B. Variance Fee. At the time of application for variance from the provisions of this chapter, the applicant shall pay a fee in accordance with the fee schedule established and amended from time to time by the city commission and on file with the city recorder.
- C. Procedure. A variance application shall be treated in the manner provided by [Chapter 17.50](#) of this code with respect to zoning variances.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.050 Prohibited signs.

It is unlawful for the following signs to be erected or to be maintained except as otherwise provided in this chapter:

- A. Billboards;
- B. A sign that interferes in any way with a traffic control sign or device or prevents clear and unobstructed view of official traffic control signs or devices or approaching or merging traffic;
- C. A sign that contains, includes or is illuminated by any flashing or revolving, rotating or moving light or moves or has any animated or moving parts. This subsection does not apply to traffic control signs or devices;
- D. A sign with lighting which is not effectively shielded as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the main traveled right-of-way of a state highway, or is of such low intensity or brilliance as not to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of a motor vehicle or otherwise to interfere with the operations thereof;
- E. A sign located upon a tree, or painted or drawn upon a natural feature;
- F. An obsolete sign;
- G. Portable signs, A-frame signs, sandwich boards, tent signs, streamers, strings of lights, balloons, hulas, banners or pennants, excepting traditional holiday decorations; and except as provided in [Section 15.28.010\(B\)](#);
- H. A sign that obstructs free ingress to or egress from any door, window or fire escape, alley, drive or fire lane, or is attached to a fire escape;
- I. A sign erected or maintained on public property or within the public right-of-way without permission of the public body having jurisdiction;
- J. A sign not able to withstand a wind pressure of twenty pounds per square foot of exposed surface, or is insecurely erected, or is constructed so as to constitute a fire hazard;
- K. A sign not maintained in a safe, neat, clean and attractive condition and in good repair;
- L. Any sign larger than four square feet on an undeveloped lot or parcel of property;

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

M. A sign not otherwise in compliance with any provision of this code, Oregon law or the terms and conditions of any valid sign permit issued under this chapter;

N. Signs on fences or fencing.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.060 Signs not requiring a permit.

In any zoning district, the following signs may be erected and maintained without a permit, so long as they comply with all applicable provisions of this chapter and are not illuminated;

- A. One temporary sign per street frontage of property under a single ownership provided such a sign does not cause a public safety hazard or nuisance, has no more than two faces, and that no sign face exceeds four square feet in area;
- B. Signs carved into a building or which are part of materials that are an integral part of the building not exceeding ten square feet in area. This subsection does not include signs painted on the sides of buildings;
- C. A single sign where the display surface area does not exceed two square feet;
- D. Window signs situated on the indoor-side of a window or door;
- E. Flags, limited to two per premises;
- F. Signs attached to, or carried by, a person;
- G. Signs required by law or legal action, including but not limited to, signs warning of hazardous or dangerous conditions on a premises and land use application and hearing notice signs.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.070 Signs in residential zones.

- A. Signs Allowed. In the R-10, R-8, R-6, RC-4, R-6/MH and RA-2 zoning districts, the following signs are allowed:
 - 1. All signs allowed without permit as provided by this chapter so long as the requirements of this subsection are met;
 - 2. Permitted signs so long as a permit is first obtained as required by this chapter, and the requirements of this subsection are met.
- B. Display Requirements. All signs in the residential zones listed in this section must comply with the following requirements:
 - 1. Not more than one wall sign or free-standing sign to be visible from each frontage, with no more than three frontages. Wall signs shall be measured by the outer limits of the lettering, illustration or other display;
 - 2. Maximum twenty square feet of area per sign face;
 - 3. Not to exceed ten feet in length;
 - 4. Five feet maximum height above grade;
 - 5. Primarily constructed of natural materials;
 - 6. Sign shall be setback from the street as determined by the sign official, but not more than ten feet from the street right-of-way;

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

7. If illuminated, the source of illumination shall be external to the sign and directed or shielded so as to not shine directly onto any neighboring structure.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.075 Signs for listed conditional uses in residential zones.

- A. For conditional uses in residential zones, a sign that meets the following standards shall be allowed provided a permit is first obtained as required by this chapter:
 1. One wall sign per frontage is allowed. Additionally, one free-standing sign per conditional use is allowed;
 2. Maximum thirty-two square feet of area per sign face;
 3. Not to exceed ten feet in length;
 4. Eight feet maximum height above grade;
 5. Primarily constructed of natural materials or similar products, such as wood, stone, brick or metal;
 6. If illuminated, the source of illumination shall be external to the sign and directed or shielded so as to not shine directly onto any neighboring structure.

(Ord. 05-1002, 2005)

15.28.080 Signs in office, commercial and industrial zones.

- A. Signs Allowed. In the LOC, LO, NC, HC, LC, C, CBD, M-1 and M-2 zoning districts, the following signs are allowed:
 1. All signs allowed without permit as provided by this chapter, so long as the requirements of this subsection are met;
 2. Wall signs, so long as a permit is first obtained as required by this chapter and the display surface area is no larger than two square feet for each lineal foot of the wall on which the sign is erected;
 3. Free-standing signs, so long as a permit is first obtained as required by this chapter and the following standards are met:
 - a. Number. One free-standing sign shall be permitted for each street frontage of a premises, provided minimum subdivision lot frontage of thirty feet is met. No free-standing sign shall be permitted on the same frontage where there is a projecting or roof sign. Free-standing signs on the same premises but on different frontages shall be separated by a minimum of fifty feet distance.
 - b. Area. Where the street frontage is less than fifty feet, the maximum display surface area shall not exceed fifty square feet, with twenty-five square feet maximum area per sign face. Where the street frontage is greater than fifty feet but less than two hundred feet, surface display area shall not exceed one hundred square feet, with fifty square feet maximum area per sign face. Where the street frontage is two hundred feet or greater, the surface display area shall not exceed three hundred square feet, with a maximum area of one hundred fifty square feet per sign face. In no case shall any sign have a surface display area in excess of three hundred square feet.
 - c. Projection. Free-standing signs shall not project over a public right-of-way.

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

- d. Clearance. A minimum clearance of ten feet from grade shall be maintained over pedestrian or vehicular areas, fourteen feet over areas of truck access.
- e. Horizontal Dimension. The greatest horizontal dimension shall not exceed twenty feet for any free-standing sign.
- f. Height. The height of any free-standing sign shall not exceed twenty-five feet above grade, plus five feet for each two hundred feet, or portion thereof, frontage in excess of two hundred feet frontage. In no event shall any sign exceed thirty feet in height.

The following table summarizes free-standing sign area and height limits:

Street Frontage (in feet)	Maximum Display Surface Area (square feet)	Maximum Area of Any One Sign Face (square feet)	Maximum Height (in feet)
Up to 50	50	25	25
50 —200	100	50	25
201+	101—300	51 —150	30

- 4. Roof Signs. Roof signs are allowed so long as a permit is first obtained as required by this chapter and the following standards are met:
 - a. Number. Maximum one roof sign is permitted for each premises, and shall be permitted instead of a projecting sign or free-standing sign.
 - b. Area, projection, clearance, horizontal dimension and height shall be within the limits set for free-standing signs. Stamped approval of a licensed civil or structural engineer may be required due to stresses put on the building. No roof sign shall be erected without approval of the fire marshal after a finding that the size, type and location of the sign will not substantially interfere with fire fighting;
- 5. Projecting Signs. Projecting signs are allowed so long as a permit is first obtained as required by this chapter and the following standards are met:
 - a. Number. One projecting sign may be permitted for each business frontage. No projecting sign shall be permitted for the same business frontage where there is a free-standing or roof sign.
 - b. Area. Sign area shall not exceed sixteen square feet per sign face, with total area of all faces not to exceed thirty-two square feet.
 - c. Projection. Maximum projection from a building wall shall be four feet. No sign shall project within two feet of the curb line.
 - d. Vertical dimension. The greatest vertical dimension of a projecting sign shall not exceed four feet; provided, however, for any reduction in projection, the sign may be increased in height a like distance. The maximum projection above the wall on which the sign is erected shall be one foot, and the visible supporting structure shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible consistent with safe structural support.

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

- e. Clearance. A minimum clearance of ten feet from grade shall be maintained over pedestrian or vehicular areas, fourteen feet over areas of truck access.
 - f. Separation. The minimum distance from another projecting sign shall be twenty feet in the same horizontal plane.
 - g. Projecting signs on other project structures: awnings, marquees, canopies, false fronts and wall extensions, safely constructed and approved by the building code official, may extend beyond the limits for projecting signs. Projecting signs on such structure, shall not exceed the limits as to number, area, projection, vertical dimension, clearance and separation as provided for any projecting sign. The only exception shall be for those instances in which a projecting structure would prohibit a projecting sign within sight of pedestrians; in these instances, the clearance under the marquee or other permanent structure may be reduced to eight feet;
6. Incidental Signs. One additional sign is allowed per premises, so long as a permit is first obtained as required by this chapter, is allowed. An incidental sign may be a free-standing or wall sign, but in either case, shall meet all provisions for such signs, excepting area. The surface display area of an incidental sign shall not exceed thirty-two square feet, and no sign face shall exceed sixteen square feet.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.090 Nonconforming signs and their removal.

- A. Signs lawfully erected and maintained as of the date of the adoption of this chapter, but which do not meet the requirements of this chapter, shall be regarded as nonconforming signs which shall be lawful if a permit for the same is obtained under [Section 15.28.030](#) and may be continued for a period not to exceed ten years from the date of adoption of this chapter for the purpose of amortization of investment. Relief from this provision may be sought from the planning commission by following the procedures of [Section 15.28.040](#) for a longer amortization period, upon a showing that the applicant requires a longer period in which to amortize its investment in the sign in question. In the case of an application for a longer amortization period for an alleged nonconforming billboard, the applicant must prove, at a minimum, that the sign structure cannot reasonably be used for a sign with an area smaller than three hundred square feet.
- B. Signs located on premises annexed into the city after the effective date of the ordinance codified in this section and which signs do not comply with the provisions of the ordinance codified in this section, shall be brought into compliance with the ordinance codified in this section within a period of time not to exceed six months after the effective date of annexation; provided, however, that a landowner may, within thirty days of annexation, request a variance as provided in subsection A of this section.
- C. Any sign which is structurally altered, relocated or replaced shall immediately be brought into compliance with all applicable provisions of this chapter; provided, however, that a landowner may, within thirty days of annexation, request a variance as provided in [Section 15.28.040](#)
- D. All existing signs or portions thereof prohibited in [Section 15.28.050](#), except subsection A, shall be removed or altered to comply within six months from the date of adoption of this chapter.
- E. Within one year from the date of adoption of this chapter, the sign official or an authorized representative may inspect any sign regulated hereunder. The sign official shall have right of reasonable entry onto private premises to enforce the provisions of this chapter. After inspection, a notice shall be issued to the owner of the sign or property that lists the signs and identifies those signs which, in the opinion of the sign official, need repair or modification to bring them into compliance with this chapter and those which are in violation of the provisions of this chapter and must be removed, including the expiration of the grace period for the particular sign. The sign official

Title 15 - BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Chapter 15.28 SIGNS

may repeat such on-site inspections, with reasonable notice, from time to time as deemed necessary to enforce the provisions of this chapter.

- F. Any sign regulated under this chapter found to be in violation of this chapter shall be deemed a nuisance. Violation of the provisions of this chapter shall constitute a civil infraction, subject to the code enforcement procedures of Chapters [1.16](#) and [1.20](#)

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.100 Conflict and severability.

In the event any provision herein is found to be in conflict with any zoning, building, fire safety, health or other code provisions of the city, the provision which establishes the higher standard for the promotion and protection of the health, safety and welfare of the people shall prevail.

A finding by a court of competent jurisdiction that any portion of this chapter is invalid shall not invalidate the remaining portions. A permit issued pursuant to this chapter does not grant any authority to violate any other law or regulation that may apply.

(Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)

15.28.110 Violation—Penalty.

In addition to any other provisions hereof, it is unlawful for any person to maintain a sign or advertising structure in violation of the provisions of this chapter. Violation of any provision of this chapter is subject to the code enforcement procedures of Chapters [1.16](#), [1.20](#), [1.24](#).

(Ord. 99-1004 §27, 1999; Ord. 94-1027 §1 (part), 1994)



Oregon City Sign Code Update

Draft

Legislative Adoption Schedule



Planning Commission Work Session #1	February 24, 2014
Planning Commission Work Session #2	March 24, 2014
City Commission Work Session #1	April 8, 2014
Planning Commission Hearing #1	April 14, 2014
Planning Commission Hearing #2	April 28, 2014
City Commission Hearing #1	May 7, 2014
City Commission Hearing #2	May 21, 2014
City Commission Hearing #3	June 4, 2014

Public report comments due February 26th. To be posted online in March.

Learn more about the project at www.OCSignCode.org.