



# PLANNING, ENGINEERING & BUILDING SERVICES

## SIGNAGE STANDARDS

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The City Comprehensive Plan promotes aesthetically pleasing streetscapes to instill a sense of pride in the community and serve as a magnet for attracting new business. The purpose of the signage standards is to maintain or enhance the visual environment of the City of Liberty Lake, to protect the public health, safety and welfare; and to increase the effectiveness of visual communication in the City while promoting commerce, traffic safety, and community identity and by providing opportunities for Liberty Lake businesses, residents and property owners to appropriately display signage.

The signage standards apply to all development within the City, unless specifically exempted by City code or ordinance. A permit is required for any sign that is erected, re-erected, constructed, or structurally/electrically altered. No sign can have any adverse impact on nearby residences or institutions. Applications are reviewed only with respect to sign structure, placement, and size, excluding any reference to message, category, subject, topic, or viewpoint. This handout serves as a brief overview on City Signage Standards, for more information on specific requirements, please refer to the City of Liberty Lake Development Code.

All signs must be properly maintained by the owner or person in possession of the property on which it is installed. A damaged sign must be repaired within 30 days. Any damaged sign that may pose a hazard to passersby must be repaired or removed immediately.

**All non-exempt signs require application, review and approval by Planning, Engineering & Building Services, whether permanent or temporary in nature, except temporary political signs located on private property.**

### APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

All signage over 8 ft. in height or over 32 sq.ft. in size will need engineering (per IBC Section 107). If lighting is noted as allowed, it must be low intensity. Externally mounted illumination must be down-shielded and its output confined to the sign. Lighted signs require an electrical permit from WA State L&I.

Required submittals for permit applications:

- Completed and signed application
- Plans with dimensions and mounting details
- Site map (freestanding / monuments signs) showing dimensioned setback to right-of-way
- If intended to be visible from I-90, documentation from WA Dept of Transportation showing compliance with the Scenic Vista Act, RCW 47.42.

**Permit application and issuance is electronic. Email application packets to [permitcenter@libertylakewa.gov](mailto:permitcenter@libertylakewa.gov). Allow 2 weeks for review and approval.**

## PROHIBITED SIGNS

**Signs Prohibited in the City.** The following signs are prohibited in all zones unless otherwise specifically permitted.

- Signs, which by coloring, lighting, shape, wording or location resemble or conflict with traffic control signs or devices.
- Signs that create a safety hazard for pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- Flashing signs.
- Flashing or neon lighting used as an alternative to signage. Exposed neon on signs.
- Portable signs exceeding 6 sq.ft.
- Readerboards signs (except as permitted herein).
- All electronically changeable message signs (except where permitted herein).
- Signs attached to or placed on a vehicle or trailer parked on public or private property, provided that this provision is not construed as prohibiting the identification of a firm or its product on a vehicle operating during the normal course of business. Franchised buses and taxis are exempt from these provisions.
- Roof signs.
- Freestanding Signage with unconcealed pole supports.
- Rotating, spinning, or motorized signs.
- Billboards / Off-premises commercial advertising.
- Signs attached to towers or wireless communication support towers.
- Inflatable signs
- A-frame signs (except as permitted herein).
- Signs attached to benches that advertise businesses, goods, services, etc.
- Signage in residential areas (except as permitted herein).
- Temporary signage (except as permitted herein).
- Commercial off-premise signs (except as permitted herein).

### Examples of Prohibited Signs:

*Portable Signs*



*Billboards*



*Inflatable Signs*



*Exposed neon on signs*



*Readerboards*



*Unconcealed Pole Signs*



*Rotating Motorized Signs*



## EXEMPT SIGNS

The following signs do not require a sign permit. These exemptions do not relieve the owner from the responsibility to comply with the provisions of the Development Code or any other law or ordinance, including the Building Code.

- Signs that are attached to buildings provided such signs are not more than 4 sq. ft. in area and project not more than 2 inches from any building surface.
- The changing of the advertising copy or message on a lawfully erected sign, readerboard, or similar sign specifically designed for replaceable copy.
- Painting, repainting, or normal maintenance, unless a structural or electrical change is made.
- Incidental signs.
- Any sign not visible from the street or sidewalk.
- Traffic or pedestrian control signs or signals, or signs indicating scenic, historic, or public points of interest (i.e. government services, parks, recreation, schools, transportation facilities), which are erected by or on the order of a public officer in the performance of his/her public duty;
- Signs required by law;
- Official public notices, official court notices or official law enforcement notices.

## ALLOWED SIGNS

The following pages describe allowed signage parameters. In general:

- No signage is allowed off-premise except multi-business and campus monument signs
- No signs are allowed in the public right-of-way except community-wide event A-boards
- Sign colors must meet architectural design guidelines within the appropriate zoning district.

### Examples of Permitted Signage:

*Permanent City Gateway Signs*



*Real Estate Sign*



*Temporary Banners, Flags, Pennants, and Searchlights*



*Construction Site Sign*



*Permanent Residential Subdivision or Area Name Signs*



## SIGNS NOT COVERED IN THIS INSTRUCTIONAL BROCHURE

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- Campus Monument Signs (refer to City Development Code Section 10-3E-7)
- Electronically Changeable Signs (refer to City Development Code Section 10-3E-7)
- Real Estate Open House / Directional Signs (refer to City Development Code Section 10-3E-7)
- Bulletin Boards (refer to City Development Code Section 10-3E-7)
- Permanent Residential Subdivision or Area Name Signs (see City Development Code 10-3E-7)
- Permanent City Gateway Signs / Community Message Boards (see City Development Code 10-3E-7)

## SIGN STANDARDS IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES

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Permanent signs are allowed in residential zones in accordance with the following:

- **Nameplates.** A nameplate, which indicates no more than the name and address of the occupant of the premises, is permitted, provided that the sign does not exceed a maximum area of 3 sq.ft.
- **Permitted Signs by Use.** The following categories of uses are allowed signage as listed and the signs may be lighted. Monument signs cannot exceed 6 ft. in height.
  - **Semi-Public** uses include a church, public park, multiple-family dwelling, dormitory, fraternity, sorority, nursing home, retirement apartment, public building, child day-care center, family day-care provider, nonprofit community hall or lodge, animal clinic, cemetery, sanitarium.
    - One wall sign allowed not to exceed 10 sq.ft. placed flat against wall.
    - One monument sign allowed on-premise not to exceed 16 sq.ft.
  - **School/Public** uses include a school (kindergarten through university), hospital, police station, fire station, post office or public golf course, incinerator, solid waste recycling transfer site, or landfills.
    - One wall sign allowed not to exceed 20 sq.ft. placed flat against wall.
    - One monument sign allowed on-premise not to exceed 32 sq.ft.
  - **Office** uses include a business or professional office. (Complexes with multiple buildings are allowed 1 wall sign per building. An office building with 4 or more offices will be allowed a maximum aggregate sign area of 64 sq.ft.)
    - One wall sign allowed not to exceed 16 sq.ft. placed flat against wall.
    - One monument sign allowed on-premise not to exceed 32 sq.ft.
  - **Commercial Use/Other** includes commercial uses other than those listed above but does not include home industry or home profession.
    - One wall sign allowed not to exceed 20 sq.ft. placed flat against wall.
    - One monument sign allowed on-premise not to exceed 20 sq.ft.

## SIGNS STANDARDS FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Only campus monument signs and multi-business freestanding / monument signs are allowed off-premises. All other signs covered in the following are required to be on-premises.

- **Wall Signs – Individual and Multiple Businesses.**

Multiple wall signs are allowed on the building, but the total sq. ft. area cannot exceed the maximum as defined below. For signage facing a residential zone, the total allowed sq.ft. is 25% of the maximum allowance calculated. All signs have a maximum allowed 3 lines of copy.

To calculate the allowed sign area:

1. From Figure A-1, determine which façade is the PBW for your business.
2. Calculate the wall area of the PBW by multiplying the height and length of the PBW. In the case of multi-story buildings or buildings taller than 30 feet, only the first 30 feet is used to calculate wall area.
3. Divide the wall area of the PBW by 10. This is the total sq.ft. allowed for the sum total of all wall signs for each business. The total cannot be greater than 150 sq.ft. for each business.

**Exchange options:** Businesses are allowed to exchange allowances for wall signage and monument/free-standing signage. The maximum wall allowances can be increased if the allowance for the monument/freestanding signage is decreased by the same amount. The wall sign permit will be conditioned to prohibit a future monument sign/freestanding sign any larger than the exchange calculation allows.

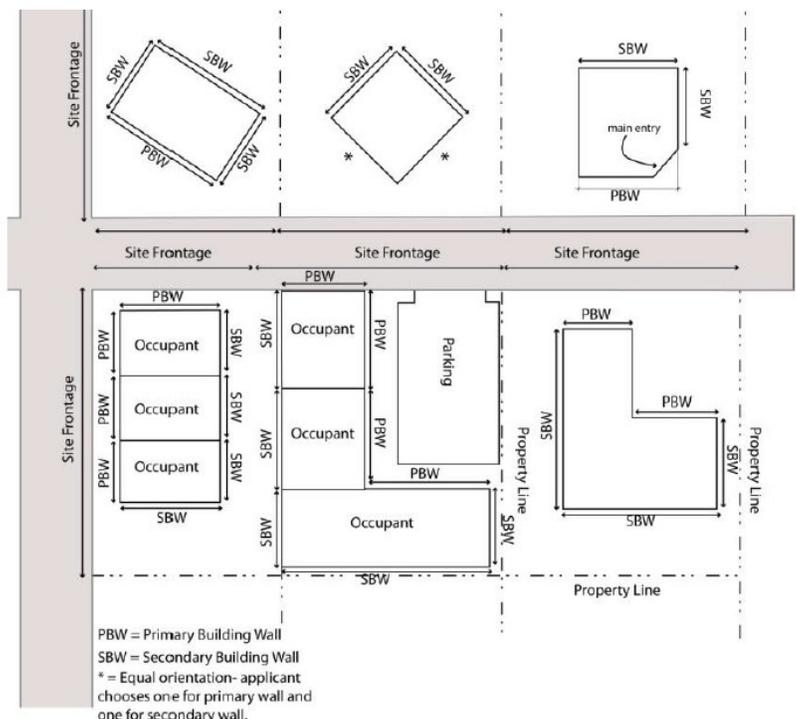


Figure A-1 – Primary and secondary building walls

For businesses in the I-90 corridor:

The PBW is the side of the building that provides access to the business. Total sq.ft. for the PBW is calculated the same as shown above, as is the 150 max. allowed. However, additional allowances are given for the SBW. Select which wall is to be the SBW, calculate the wall area as above, then divide by 10. This is the sign area allowed for the SBW to a maximum of 300 sq.ft. The SBW total sq.ft. can be used on any wall. On properties where I-90 is the principal frontage and there is no frontage along another right-of-way, the total sq.ft. for the PBW and SBW can be aggregated and used on any wall if the following are met: a freestanding sign is not provided along I-90 and only 1 monument sign is provided at the access street to the building.

## SIGNS STANDARDS FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONES (CONT.)

- Freestanding / Monument Signs – Individual Business.** One on-premises freestanding / monument sign for an individual business is permitted, not to exceed the area and height limits as provided in Table 4 below. All freestanding and monument signs must be located in a maintained landscaped area and 10' feet back from any public right-of-way.

TABLE 4 Zone	Max Sign Area	Max Sign Height	Sign Type
M-1	50 sq. ft.	8.5 feet	monument
M-2 / M-3 / RD-M	75 sq. ft.	8.5 feet	monument
C-1 / C-2 / I / P / O / RD-C	75 sq. ft.	8.5 feet	monument
M-2 / C-2 / P / RD-C*	150 sq. ft.*	30 feet*	Freestanding*

\* Parcel is within Interstate 90 Corridor

- Freestanding / Monument Signs – Multiple Businesses.** Freestanding on-premises sign(s) for multiple businesses are permitted, not to exceed the number, maximum area and height limits as provided in Table 5. Freestanding signage allowed for an individual business cannot be combined with the signage allowed for multiple businesses. Multiple businesses located on one parcel and/or within one building are required to utilize multiple business freestanding / monument signage standards, rather than individual business freestanding / monument signage standards. A group of businesses may consolidate their allowed freestanding / monument signs into one location as long as the maximum number and size allowed for the zone in Table 5 are not exceeded. All freestanding and monument signs must be located in a maintained landscaped area and 10' feet back from any public right-of-way.

TABLE 5 Zone	Max # of Signs	Max Sign Area	Max Sign Height	Sign Type
M-1	1	75 sq. ft.	8.5 feet	monument
M-2 / M-3 / RD-M	1 per street frontage	100 sq. ft.	8.5 feet	monument
C-1 / C-2 / I / P / O / RD-C	1 per street frontage	100 sq. ft.	8.5 feet	monument
M-2 / C-2 / P / RD-C*	1 per I-90 frontage*	250 sq. ft.*	30 feet*	Freestanding*

\* Parcel is within Interstate 90 Corridor

Figure C-1 – Example of maximum allowed signage on a parcel with single street frontage.

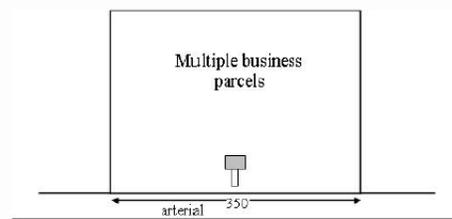
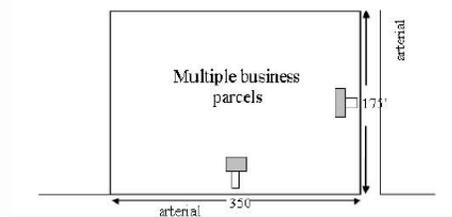


Figure C-2 – Example of maximum allowed signage on a parcel with dual frontage.



## SIGNS STANDARDS FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONES (CONT.)

### SIGN AREA CALCULATIONS

Sign area is the total area of a sign visible from any one viewpoint or direction, excluding the sign support structure. Its size is calculated using the methods described below.

- A wall sign area is calculated by measuring the area created by drawing imaginary straight lines around the entire copy or grouping of such letters, words or symbols, and then multiplying  $A \times B$  as illustrated in Figure 3.

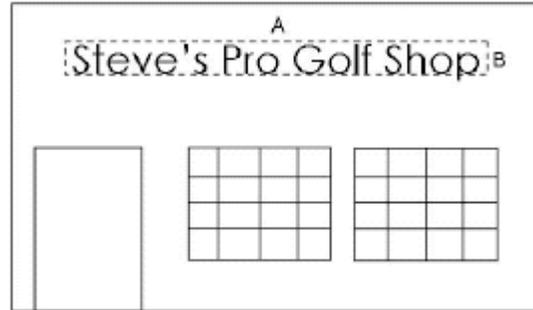


Figure 3

- A freestanding sign area consisting of one sign is calculated as shown in Figure 4. Multiply  $A \times B$  to determine area. The sign area of a freestanding sign consisting of more than one sign is computed by adding together the total area(s) of all signs as shown in Figure 5.

The sign area for multiple-sided signs: The area for a two-sided (back to back) sign is calculated using one face, therefore allowing both faces to be of equal size (for example, a two-sided sign has two faces with 18 square feet per side, therefore the sign area is 18 square feet).

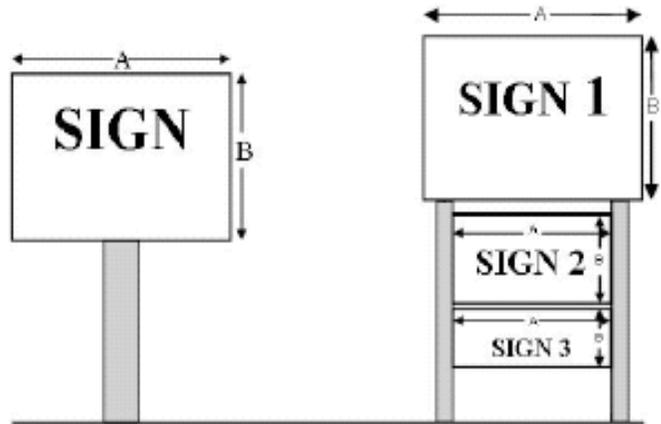


Figure 4

Figure 5

- A monument sign area (consisting of a sign with a solid base) is calculated as shown in Figure 6. The monument sign area (consisting of signage within the base area) is calculated as shown in Figure 7.

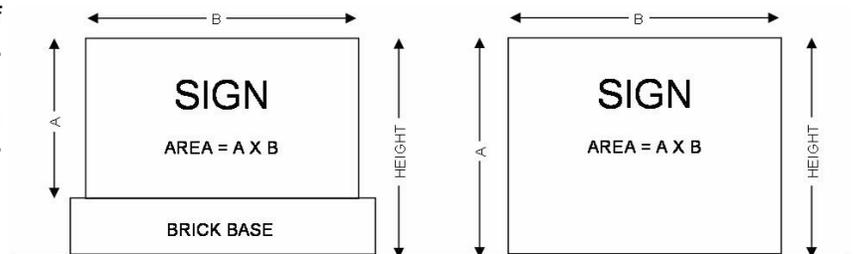
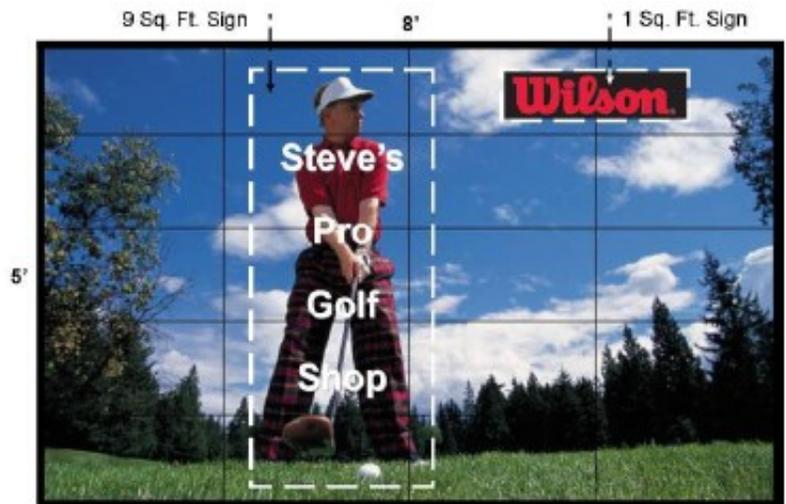


FIGURE 6

FIGURE 7

## SIGNS STANDARDS FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONES (CONT.)

- **Window Signs.** Signs applied to a window or mounted or suspended directly behind a window of a business are permitted as follows: Multiply the allowed wall signage by 0.20 to determine the max size of the window sign (to a maximum of 10 sq.ft.). Window signage can be placed on one or more windows as long as the aggregate area of window signage does not exceed the max calculated. Only those portions of the window sign which contain identifying or advertising text is included in the wall sign size. Draw a line around the advertising text. Multiply the width by the length to get the total sq.ft. allowance. Window signage can be changed throughout the year as long as the overall allowed area is maintained.



If a business is allowed 50 sq. feet of wall signage, then they would be allowed 10 sq. feet of window signage which can be placed on one or more windows up to the aggregate total of 10 sq. feet of window signage. See single window example above.

- **Business A-Boards.** Businesses are permitted to have one A-Board / A-Frame sign on-premises. The sign must not exceed 6 sq.ft. and not exceed 3 ft. in height. The sign cannot be lighted or have any moving text or image. Signs may be displayed only during business hours. If displayed after dark, it must be moved to a location where it is readily visible so as not to become a tripping hazard. The sign must be placed no further than 12' from the building entrance or the driveway entrance. If near the driveway, the sign cannot be within the clear view triangle or any location which will impede vehicular traffic. The sign cannot obstruct the safe use of sidewalks, building entrances or stairs by pedestrians. At least 3' setback from sidewalks is required.



The sign needs to be constructed of materials able to withstand typical northwest weather and wind with copy of professional quality. Signs must be maintained. Damaged signs need to be removed immediately.

- **Business Drive-through Menu Boards.** Freestanding menu boards must be included in the freestanding sign area allowance. If they are completely screened (with the use of berms and/or evergreen landscaping) and not visible from the right-of-way (street and sidewalk), they are not defined as signage and can be excluded. Similarly, wall mounted menu boards must be included in the allowed wall sign area unless they are not visible from the right-of-way and as such are not defined signage.

## **TEMPORARY SIGNS PERMITTED IN ALL ZONES**

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### **Temporary Banners, Flags, and Pennants -**

- One temporary banner, flag, or pennant for special events (such as grand openings) can be mounted on-premise. Its use cannot exceed 30 days in any one calendar year. Sign cannot exceed 75 sq.ft. For properties within the Interstate 90 Corridor, 150 sq.ft. is maximum allowed.

### **Temporary Construction Site Signs -**

- One construction sign can be mounted on-premise that identifies the future use of a site, the architects, engineers, contractors, financial institutions, and other individuals or firms involved with the construction of a project. The sign must be removed prior to issuance of the occupancy permit. Sign cannot exceed 32 sq.ft. in size nor exceed 6' above grade. The content cannot include advertisement of any product.

### **Temporary Real Estate Wall Signs -**

- Commercial buildings can have one real estate sign located on a wall or in a window advertising the prospective sale, lease or rental of the property. The sign or banner must be flush to the wall, mounted below the roof eave and not facing existing residential areas. The sign cannot be lighted. Its use cannot exceed 1 year and must be removed once the property is sold or leased. The sign allowance is 1 sq.ft./10 sq.ft. of building façade up to a maximum of 150 sq.ft.

### **Temporary Real Estate Freestanding Signs -**

- One sign can be mounted on-premise advertising the sale, lease or rental of the property. Only one sign per frontage road and per parcel is allowed. Sign cannot be lighted. Its use cannot exceed 1 year and must be removed once the property is sold or leased. Signs cannot exceed 6' above grade, except as noted.
  - Residential properties less than 5 acres: Sign cannot not exceed 5 sq.ft.
  - Residential properties 5 or more acres: Sign cannot exceed 16 sq.ft.
  - Commercial /Industrial properties < 1 acre: Sign cannot exceed 16 sq.ft.
  - Commercial/Industrial properties 1 or more acre.: Sign cannot exceed 32 sq.ft.
  - Commercial/Industrial in I90 corridor: Sign cannot exceed 96 sq.ft. and 16' above grade

### **Temporary Political Campaign Signs -**

- Signs may be displayed only on private property with the consent of the property owner. They must be removed within 14 days following the election. If a run-off election is required, signs may remain until 14 following the run-off elections. A permit is not required for these signs.

### **Temporary Community Event Signs -**

- Signs may be located on the Public right-of-way as long as they do not interfere with utilities, or auto/pedestrian traffic. Activities must be open to the public to be considered a "Community Event". Signs may be A-boards form and are limited to 5 sq.ft. area and 3' height. They may not be lighted. Its use cannot exceed 8 calendar days prior to the event and 2 days after conclusion.

## DEFINITIONS

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**Signage Definitions.** The following definitions are contained within the City Development Code Article 10-1C. Please consult the Development Code for additional definitions.

- **A-board/A-frame sign** – A self-supporting, portable sign with one or two faces adjoined at the top and displayed at an angle, which is not permanently anchored, and designed for placement near a sidewalk, plaza, or other area used by pedestrians.
- **Billboards** - Outdoor Advertising signs containing a message, commercial or otherwise, unrelated to any use or activity of the property on which the sign is located.
- **Bulletin Board** - A sign which identifies an institution or organization on the premise on which it is located and which contains the name of the institution or organization, the names of individuals connected with it, and general announcements of events or activities occurring at the institution.
- **Community Event** - A celebration, fair, festival, or other special event generally recognized by the community and advertised as such. Examples are the Pavillion Park Summer Festival, Easter Egg Hunt, Memorial Day Pancake Feed, Liberty Lake Yard Sale, Barefoot in the Park, Mutt Strut, Winter Festival, harvest or holiday festivals, annual sporting events and fundraisers, etc. that are recognized and advertised in the community and open to the general public.
- **Drive-up, drive-in, or drive-through components**—Driveway queuing areas, windows and similar facilities for use by clients or customers who drive up and remain in their automobiles while conducting business. A drive-thru window at an establishment, from which business is conducted with clients or customers who drive up to the window and remain in their automobiles.
- **Electronically changeable sign (Electronic Message Display)** – A sign capable of displaying words, symbols, figures, or images that can be electronically or mechanically changed by remote or automatic means.
- **Facade** – The portion of the front exterior elevation on the building extending from grade to the top of the parapet, wall or eaves and extending the entire length of the building.
- **Flashing Sign** - An electrical sign or portion thereof which changes light intensity in a brief, brilliant, or sudden and transient outburst of light causing a steady on and off, glittering, sparkling, or scintillating pattern. (This definition does not include electronically changeable message signs or signs which simulate motion for mood lighting purposes in which no more than one-third 1/3 of the changing light source is off at any time.)
- **Freestanding Sign** - A sign not attached to or forming part of a building. A Freestanding Sign, as used in Article 10-3E, must have at least 50% of the width of the sign constructed in a monument style (also see Monument Sign).
- **Frontage** - The dimension of a property line abutting a public or private street.
- **Inflatable Sign** – Any object enlarged or inflated which floats, is tethered in the air, is activated by air or moving gas, or is located on the ground or on a building with or without copy or other graphic.
- **Incidental Sign** - A small non-electric information sign 4 sq.ft. or less in area which pertains to goods, products, services, or facilities which are available on the premises where the sign occurs and intended primarily for the convenience of the public while on the premises.
- **Individual business** - One business on one parcel, provided the parcel is not part of a multiple business complex, and also provided the parcel is not part of a group of multiple contiguous parcels under the same ownership. Individual business signage may include in individual business parcels under the same ownership.

## DEFINITIONS (CONT.)

- **Interstate 90 Corridor** - That portion delineated as being 250 feet beyond either side of the I-90 right-of-way that is between the east and west boundaries of the City (excluding exit and entrance ramps). See map on right.
- **Monument Sign** - A sign not attached to or forming part of a building constructed as a solid structure or one which gives the appearance of a continuous, non-hollow, unbroken, mass.
- **Neon/exposed neon** – An electric sign consisting of gas-filled tubing exposed to view.
- **Off-Premise Sign** - A sign **not** located on the premises or parcel of the use or activity to which the sign pertains.
- **Pole support** – A sign support structure that is narrower than the display surface of the sign.
- **Portable Sign** - Any sign which is not permanently affixed and is designed for or capable of being moved, except those signs explicitly designed for people to carry on their person.
- **Premises** - A lot of record not separated by right-of-way and owned or managed by the same individual or entity.
- **Readerboard** - A sign face consisting of tracts to hold readily changeable letters allowing frequent changes of copy.
- **Roof Sign** - A sign supported by and erected on and/or above a roof, wall, or parapet of a building or structure.
- **Sign / signage** - Any visual communication device, structure, or fixture which is visible from any right-of-way and is intended to aid the establishment in question in promoting the sale of products, goods, services, or events, or to identify a building using graphics, letters, figures, symbols, trademarks or written copies. Painted wall designs or patterns, which do not represent a product, service or registered trademark or which do not identify the user, is not to be considered a sign. If a design or pattern is combined with a sign, only that part of the design or pattern, which cannot be distinguished from the sign, will be considered as part of the sign. This definition does not include billboards or video boards.
- **Temporary banner** – A temporary sign constructed of a strip of cloth, paper, plastic, or other material which is supported from a center pole or between poles or fastened to buildings or other structures.
- **Temporary sign** – Any non-permanently affixed sign designed or intended to be displayed for limited periods of time.
- **Wall Sign** - A nonpaper sign attached or erected parallel to and extending not more than fifteen (15) inches from the facade or face of any building to which it is attached and supported throughout its entire length, with the exposed face of the sign parallel to the plane of said wall or facade.
- **Window Sign** - A sign applied to a window or mounted or suspended directly behind a window.

