



To: Plan Commission

From: Daniel Ritter, AICP, Community Development Director
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Date: July 9, 2026

Re: Discussion of Text Amendments to Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances

Application Background

City Staff periodically review the Zoning Ordinance and the City Code of Ordinances to ensure they remain effective in advancing the City's goals pertaining to economic development, land use compatibility, community appearance, and quality of life. Through ongoing administration of the Code, Staff have identified concerns regarding the effectiveness of the City's current sign regulations. Staff have also received feedback from residents, businesses, and elected officials regarding the visual impact of permanent and temporary signage throughout the community. Based on this feedback and Staff's experience administering the Sign Code, Staff are considering amendments to the City's Sign Code and are requesting preliminary feedback and direction from the Plan Commission regarding the proposed text amendments before formally presenting the proposed text amendments to the Plan Commission at a Public Hearing, tentatively scheduled for August 13, 2026.

Summary of Proposed Text Amendments

Through the administration, interpretation, and enforcement of the City's Sign Code (Chapter 15.12 of the Code of Ordinances), staff have identified several provisions that are outdated, difficult to interpret, or unnecessarily burdensome to administer. In addition, the current regulations do not adequately address evolving sign technologies, changing legal standards, or contemporary development practices. These shortcomings have contributed to inconsistent sign quality, visual clutter, and enforcement challenges along the City's commercial corridors.

Staff proposes a comprehensive review and update of the current Sign Code to modernize the regulations and ensure they remain effective, enforceable, and aligned with the City's planning and economic development objectives. Proposed text amendments would include:

- Improve overall layout and structure of the Sign Code, by reorganizing relevant provisions under more condensed sub-topics. The current Sign Code has a total of 35 sub-sections. The revised sub-sections will be grouped under 9 main sub-sections so that the City Staff and the public can better navigate the Sign Code and find relevant regulations under the same main sub-section. For example, all general provisions applicable to all sign types will be grouped under *General Sign Provisions*, and all regulations pertaining to permits, enforcement of the code, variation and appeal requests, and non-conforming signs will be grouped under sub-section *Administration and Enforcement*.
- Establish updated standards for sign design, size, placement, maintenance, and landscaping to improve community aesthetics. New ground signs in all zoning districts will be required to have a decorative sign base (minimum 75% of sign width) and landscaping

around the sign base (2 sq-ft of landscaping for every 1 sq-ft of sign area but not less than 50 sq-ft in area).

- Expand the list of prohibited signs: attention-getting devices such as feather flags, pennants, balloons, etc. will be prohibited as temporary signs; and pole and pylon signs will be prohibited in all zoning districts.
- Expand Definitions Section to add definitions for more sign typologies, and better define zoning terms, and sign requirements.
- Ensure compliance with current legal requirements and standards, including having content-neutral sign regulations.
- Clarify nonconforming sign provisions that create administrative and enforcement challenges while allowing ongoing maintenance and panel changes to occur as to not create undue costs onto businesses.
- Provide clear standards for specific sign types, including window signs, awning and canopy signs, fuel station signage, and other commonly used sign formats.
- Improve consistency and cohesion between the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and economic development goals.
- Enhance public safety by addressing visibility, traffic safety, wayfinding, illumination, and maintenance concerns.
- Streamline the review procedures and administrative processes for businesses/property owners.
- Create fair and predictable standards that balance business identification needs with neighborhood compatibility and community character.

Overall, proposed amendments would modernize the City's Sign Code, improve its clarity and enforceability, and support the City's vision for attractive commercial corridors, high-quality development, and a well-maintained built environment.

Staff Recommendation

Direct staff to complete the applicable research and draft the proposed Sign Code text amendments for review at a Plan Commission public hearing. Provide any feedback on specific changes beyond those outlined that the Commission would like to be researched.

Attachments

- Exhibit A - Chapter 15.12 Sign Code of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances (Current)