

STAFF REPORT – Text Amendment

Planning Commission

Public Hearing Date: July 20, 2023

City Council Meeting: August 7, 2023

**Case:** TA-2023-02

**Proposed Request:** Text Amendments to the City of Forest Park Sign Ordinance

**Staff Report Compiled By:** LaShawn Gardiner, Director-Planning & Community Development

**Staff Recommendation:** Approval to amend the Sign Ordinance

**PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS**

1. The Planning & Community Development Department is proposing three text amendments to the Sign Ordinance. Case #TA-2023-02 includes an amendment providing an addition to Sec. 8-3-3 Definitions, an amendment eliminating language from Sec. 8-3-14 Prohibited Signs and Devices, and an amendment adding standards to Sec. 8-3-23 Restrictions Based on Location.

**BACKGROUND**

The Planning & Community Development Department has discovered an area of the Sign Ordinance that needs to be amended. The requested text amendments will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. The use will not be affected in a substantial, adverse manner.

The following text amendments have been proposed:

2. An amendment to Section 8-3-3 Definitions, adding Changeable Copy, Message Board, and Reader Board.
3. An amendment to Section 8-3-14 Prohibited Signs, eliminating the word changeable copy signs.
4. An amendment to Section 8-3-23 Restrictions Based on Location.

The update creates a standard for the type of signs allowed in said zoning districts. The current sign ordinance limits the ability of establishments such as theaters, auditoriums, and cultural arts venues to advertise and promote performances. This update will clarify the requirements.

*ARTICLE A. GENERAL PROVISIONS*

**Sec. 8-3-3. Definitions-The addition of New Definitions**

**Changeable Copy Sign--** A sign which allows characters, letters, or illustrations to be changed without altering the sign.

**Message Board Sign**-- a board or sign on which messages or notices are displayed.

**Reader Board Sign**-- Reader board means a sign that is designed so that characters, letters, or illustrations can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or the surface of the sign.

### **Sec. 8-3-14. Prohibited signs and devices.**

The following types of signs are prohibited in the city:

- (1) *Balloons, pennants, streamers.* Balloons, except as explicitly allowed herein, pennants, streamers, feather signs, or air or gas filled figures.
- (2) *String lights.* Signs consisting in whole or in part of a series, line, or row of lights, whether supported or connected by cables or wires or other physical means, within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a street and visible therefrom. Notwithstanding the foregoing, white string lights shall be exempted from this section and colored string lights and decorations displayed during the months of November, December and January shall be exempted from this section. At no time may string lights be used to outline building elements such as roofs, windows, archways, or doors.
- (3) *Beacons, search lights, laser.* Promotional beacons, search lights or laser lights or images.
- (4) *Audible signs.* Any sign which emits a sound which is audible or emits a signal which can be converted into audible sounds, whether by radio or other means.
- (5) *Signs in right-of-way.* Signs in a public right-of-way, other than those belonging to a government, public service agency, or railroad.
- (6) *Signs on tree or utility pole.* Signs mounted or located on a tree, utility pole, or other similar structure.
- (7) *Roof signs.* Roof signs and signs which extend vertically above any portion of a roof or parapet of the applicable wall that is visible to adjacent property owners.
- (8) *Portable signs.* Portable signs (except sidewalk/sandwich signs), including signs attached to any parked vehicle or trailer, so as to be visible from a public right-of way.
- (9) *Obscene signs.* Signs which depict obscene material.
- (10) *Illegal activity signs.* Signs which advertise an activity which is illegal under federal, state, or local laws.
- (11) *Signs not maintained.* Signs not in good repair, in violation of codes, or containing or exhibiting broken panels, visible rust, visible rot, damaged support structures, or missing letters.
- (12) *Abandoned signs.* Abandoned signs.
- (13) *Animated; flashing; electronic.* Animated signs, flashing signs, electronic signs, and **changeable-copy signs** (except as explicitly allowed herein).
- (14) *Imitation traffic signs.* Signs which contain or are an imitation of an official traffic sign or signal or contain the words "stop," "go," "slow," "caution," "warning," or similar words in such a manner as to resemble official traffic control signs.

### **Sec. 8-3-23. Restrictions based on location.**

If not otherwise stated, any sign not specifically allowed in a zoning district as provided under this section shall be prohibited in that district, except as otherwise provided for under this chapter. The following standards govern signs within specific zoning districts.

- (1) RS—Single family residential district.

- a. *Entry feature sign/freestanding sign.* One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign per lot occupied with an institutional use shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has frontage. The sign may have sign panels.
  - 1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign or two (2) single-faced freestanding monument signs not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet for each side of a platted single-family subdivision entrance shall be permitted for each street on which the subdivision has an entrance. If developed with a mixture of detached and attached dwellings in separate pods or phases, an additional sixteen (16) square foot sign shall be permitted for the attached dwelling phase.
  - 2. Entry feature signs shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet, may be externally illuminated, and shall not have changeable copy.
  - 3. Entry feature signs may be attached to a subdivision entrance wall, provided the wall is no more than eight (8) feet in height, and so long as the top of the sign panel is no more than six (6) feet in height.
  
- (2) RT—Two family residential district.
  - a. *Entry feature sign/freestanding sign.*
    - 1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign per lot occupied with an institutional use shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has frontage. The sign may have sign panels.
    - 2. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign or two (2) single-faced freestanding monument signs not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet for each side of a platted single-family subdivision entrance shall be permitted for each street on which the subdivision has an entrance. If developed with a mixture of detached and attached dwellings in separate pods or phases, an additional sixteen (16) square foot sign shall be permitted for the attached dwelling phase.
    - 3. Entry feature signs shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet, may be externally illuminated, and shall not have changeable copy.
    - 4. Entry feature signs may be attached to a subdivision entrance wall, provided the wall is no more than eight (8) feet in height, and so long as the top of the sign panel is no more than six (6) feet in height.
  
- (3) RM—Multiple family residential district.
  - a. *Entry feature sign/freestanding sign.*
    - 1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for each street on which the multi-family lot has frontage. The sign shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet, may be externally illuminated, and shall not have changeable copy.
    - 2. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign per lot occupied with an institutional use shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has frontage. The sign may have sign panels.
  
- (4) MH—Mobile home park district.
  - a. *Entry feature sign/freestanding sign.*

1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for each street on which the multi-family lot has frontage. The sign shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet, may be externally illuminated, and shall not have changeable copy.
  2. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign per lot occupied with an institutional use shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has frontage. The sign may have sign panels.
- (5) IC—Institutional commercial district.
- a. Freestanding signs.
    1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign per street frontage shall be permitted for each lot which contains less than fifteen (15) acres.
    2. For lots that contain more than fifteen (15) acres, one (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot, freestanding monument sign for the primary frontage and one (1) thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign for each street on which the lot has secondary frontage. If the primary frontage of the lot is five hundred (500) linear feet or more and if the lot has two (2) or more entrances on the street on which it has primary frontage, the one (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot sign may be substituted by two (2) single-faced freestanding monument signs not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet. The sign shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet if thirty-two (32) square feet or less and eight (8) feet if sixty-four (64) square feet or less.
    3. All freestanding monument signs may be internally or externally lit. Each sign may have sign panels. If constructed as part of a brick or stone wall, at least thirty (30) feet in length, the sign face may double the allowable size, and sign panels may be measured separately rather than as part of a continuous polygon as required by this section. If the freestanding sign is constructed on a wall with the increased sign size allowance, the parcel shall not be permitted to construct a separate directory sign. The freestanding sign size may be increased by thirty-two (32) square feet if the owner of the parcel opts to not construct a separate directory sign.
  - b. Changeable copy, message board, or reader board wall signs.
    1. One (1) changeable copy, message board, or reader board sign shall be permitted for the following establishments:
      - Theaters
      - Auditoriums
      - Performing Arts Centers
      - Museums (Art, music)
      - Community Centers/Dinner Club offering theatrical/cultural performances/plays
      - Art Galleries (offering occasional art showcases)
    2. The changeable copy, message board, or reader board wall sign shall be considered the primary sign of the building and shall face a major street.
    3. If the business location is on a corner of a building or corner lot, a secondary business wall sign is permitted, but it cannot be a changeable copy, reader board or message board sign.

4. Changeable copy, reader board, message board wall signs shall be in an enclosed case so that letters and other characters are not blown onto the property during inclement weather or other activities or events which would cause letters to be blown off.
5. Such signs shall be mounted to the wall or façade of the building.
6. Current Wall Sign standards shall apply, refer to Sec. 8-3-24 (g) Wall Signs.
7. Signs may be illuminated during evening /normal dark hours only.
8. Sign face shall only spell out the business name when there are no events/shows being advertised.
9. Letters or copy shall be one color.
10. Illumination of sign face shall not be designed to blink or cause any type of movement; illuminated sign face shall be static at all times.

(6) GC—General commercial district.

a. *Freestanding signs.*

1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot per street frontage for each lot which contains less than fifteen (15) acres. The freestanding monument sign shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet.
2. For lots that contain more than fifteen (15) acres, one (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot, freestanding monument sign for the primary frontage and one thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign for each street on which the lot has secondary frontage. If the primary frontage of the lot is five hundred (500) linear feet or more and if the lot has two (2) or more entrances on the street on which it has primary frontage, the one (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot monument sign may be substituted by two (2) single-faced freestanding monument signs not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet. The sign shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet if thirty-two (32) square feet or less and eight (8) feet if sixty-four (64) square feet or less.
3. All freestanding signs may be internally or externally lit. Each sign may have sign panels. If constructed as part of a brick or stone wall, at least thirty (30) feet in length, the sign face may double the allowable size, and sign panels may be measured separately rather than as part of a continuous polygon as required by this section. If the freestanding sign is constructed on a wall with the increased sign size allowance, the parcel shall not be permitted to construct a separate directory sign. The freestanding monument sign size may be increased by thirty-two (32) square feet if the owner of the parcel opts to not construct a separate directory sign.

(7) **DM- Downtown Mainstreet District.**

**A. Streetscape Signage.**

1. Streetscape Signage design shall be compatible in scale, style, and composition with the building and storefront as a whole.
2. Durable materials and quality construction shall be evident in all streetscape signage.

3. Projecting Sign. Any sign which is suspended or projected from the wall, eave, or soffit of the building. Projection signs shall be located a minimum of 12 inches below the second story windowsill or top of the building, whichever is lower. Corner buildings may place projecting signage on their corner.
4. Blade signs. Shall be mounted to provide an eight-foot clearance under the lowest part of the sign and shall not extend more than five (5) feet into the right-of-way; all right-of-way encroachments shall require an encroachment permit.
5. Channel letters, silhouette signage, and individualized letter signs may be located in a signage band above the storefront windows.
6. Awning Signs. Any sign that is a part of, or attached to, an awning, canopy or other fabric, plastic or structural protective cover over a door, entrance, window, or outdoor service area. A marquee is not a canopy. Awnings may include signage.
7. Freestanding Signs. Freestanding signs are prohibited.
8. Neon Signs. Neon signs are prohibited.

**B. General Provisions**

1. Signs shall be located to fit the architectural elements such as in the lintel or sign frieze that separates the ground level from the upper façade, on the upper façade walls, or projecting from the face of the building.
2. Signs shall not obstruct the architectural elements and details of a building.
3. Wall signs shall be placed such that they align with other signs on the block.
4. Roof signs shall not be incorporated.
5. For buildings with multiple tenants, signs shall be located only on the portions of the building directly outside the area occupied by that tenant or contained within consolidated directories, as defined in the City Sign Ordinance.
6. Signs shall be illuminated by indirect lighting. Internally illuminated box-type plastic signs shall not be permitted, but signs composed of illuminated individual letters shall be permitted.

**(8) UV—Urban village district.**

**a. Freestanding signs.**

1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign per street frontage shall be permitted for each lot which contains less than fifteen (15) acres.
2. For lots that contain more than fifteen (15) acres, one (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot, freestanding monument sign for the primary frontage and one (1) thirty-

two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign for each street on which the lot has secondary frontage. If the primary frontage of the lot is five hundred (500) linear feet or more and if the lot has two (2) or more entrances on the street on which it has primary frontage, the one (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot monument sign may be substituted by two (2) single-faced freestanding monument signs not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet. The sign shall have a maximum height of six (6) feet if thirty-two (32) square feet or less and eight (8) feet if sixty-four (64) square feet or less.

**(9) Industrial districts.**

a. *Freestanding signs.*

1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has up to and including five hundred (500) feet of frontage. The sign shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet (see exception) and shall not have changeable copy.
2. One (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot, freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has more than five hundred (500) linear square feet and up to one thousand (1,000) linear feet of frontage. The sign shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet (see exception) and shall not have changeable copy.
3. One (1) maximum seventy-two (72) square foot, freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has more than one thousand (1,000) linear feet of frontage (excludes spin sites and out-parcels). The sign shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet (see exception) and shall not have changeable copy.
4. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign per spin site or out-parcel which is identified on a site plan approved pursuant to a single zoning case.
5. Freestanding monument signs on arterial streets may be ten (10) feet in height.
6. All freestanding signs may be internally or externally lit. Each sign may have sign panels. If constructed as part of a brick or stone wall, at least thirty (30) feet in length, the sign face may double the allowable size, and sign panels may be measured separately rather than as part of a continuous polygon as required by this section. If the freestanding sign is constructed on a wall with the increased sign size allowance, the parcel shall not be permitted to construct a separate directory sign. The freestanding sign size may be increased by thirty-two (32) square feet if the owner of the parcel opts to not construct a separate directory sign.

**(10) GZ Gillem zoning district.**

- a. *Billboards.* Billboards are prohibited.
- b. *Freestanding.*

1. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has up to and including five hundred (500) feet of frontage. The sign shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet (see exception) and shall not have changeable copy.
2. One (1) maximum sixty-four (64) square foot, freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for each street on which the lot has more than five hundred (500) linear

square feet and up to one thousand (1,000) linear feet of frontage. The sign shall have a maximum height of eight (8) feet (see exception) and shall not have changeable copy.

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4. One (1) maximum thirty-two (32) square foot, freestanding sign per spin site or out-parcel which is identified on a site plan approved pursuant to a single zoning case.
5. Freestanding signs on arterial streets may be ten (10) feet in height.
6. All freestanding signs may be internally or externally lit. Each sign may have sign panels. If constructed as part of a brick or stone wall, at least thirty (30) feet in length, the sign face may double the allowable size, and sign panels may be measured separately rather than as part of a continuous polygon as required by Section 23 hereof. If the freestanding sign is constructed on a wall with the increased sign size allowance, the parcel shall not be permitted to construct a separate directory sign. The freestanding sign size may be increased by thirty-two (32) square feet if the owner of the parcel opts to not construct a separate directory sign.

Staff's recommendation is **Approval** of the proposed text amendment to the identified code sections of the sign ordinance.