



# PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

---

To: Planning Commission Members

From: Liz Fields, AICP, Planner

Meeting Date: November 13, 2024

---

## Discussion Item - Amendments to the Municipal Code

**Project Overview:** The City of Franklin is proposing amendments to the City’s Municipal Code Section 1111.08 Signs. At this time the item is being brought forward for discussion to share the proposed changes with the Planning Commission. The City is not requesting that the Planning Commission approve a motion to initiate a text amendment to the City’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) under Section 1115.04 of the Unified Development Ordinance at this time.

**Comments:** The City of Franklin is proposing amendments to the City’s municipal code to meet the intent and purpose of the municipal code through amendments which include new regulations for signs not previously contemplated in the code, the consolidation of similar sign regulations, and general revisions which aim to increase the accessibility of the sign regulation for both staff and the public.

A summary of the proposed changes to the municipal code is included below. The modifications reflect the new section references, sections that are noted as being removed are noted by their current section reference.

- **Section 1111.08(c)(2)** – Clarification that sign permits are reviewed and approved by the Zoning Official unless specifically stated otherwise.
- **Section 1111.08(c)(3) Submittal Requirements** – Language was added which require a landscaping plan and lighting plan be submitted when applying for a sign permit where applicable.
- **Section 1111.08(f) Prohibited Signs** – This subsection was added to clearly state the types of permanent signs that are prohibited within the City of Franklin. New types of signs added to this list include:
  - Revolving signs;

- Inflatable signs, air activated devices, beacons, searchlights, and other similar devices;
  - Bench signs;
  - Mobile or portable signs; and
  - Additional prohibited temporary signs as listed in the Section.
- **Section 1111.08(g) Exempt Signs** – This section was added to clearly state the types of signs that are exempt from the requirements of the sign code. New types of exempt signs added to the list or existing types that have been modified include:
  - Governmental flags;
  - Organizational flags;
  - Identification signs – modified to allow ground mounted identification signs no larger than four feet.
  - Memorial signs – modified to include markers and statues under this category.
- **Section 1111.08(h) Permanent Signs** – A table was added which clearly indicates the types of permanent signs allowed in each district. Additional tables are added which show the specific regulations in each district for the following signs:
  - Wall signs;
  - Ground signs;
  - Residential development identification signs;
  - Menu board signs;
  - Canopy/marquee/awning signs; and
  - Directional signs
- **Section 1111.08(h)(1)(C) Wall Signs** – Language was added which require wall signs to be constructed out of channel cut letters or other high-quality sign construction types.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(1)(D) Wall Signs** – Language was added that there are not quantity requirements for wall signs as long as the cumulative square footage of all wall signs meets the maximum area requirements.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(2) Ground Signs** – Monument signs have been renamed to ground signs.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(2)(A) Ground Signs** – Language was added that requires ground signs to be located on the same parcel to which they are an accessory use and prohibiting off-premises advertising on ground signs.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(2)(B) Ground Signs** – Language was included that ground signs include a variety of designs including monument signs, post and panel signs, and other similar signs. Clarification added that ground signs do not include pole signs.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(2)(E) Ground Signs** – Language was added that ground signs are not permitted within the clear sight triangle.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(2)(G)(i) Ground Signs** – Language was added clarifying the landscaping requirement for ground signs and requiring

that the landscaped area around the sign is equal to the area of the sign.

- **Section 1111.08(h)(2)(G)(iv) Ground Signs** – Language was added clarifying that the landscaped area around a sign includes living plants and that the use of hardscape in the landscaped area is prohibited.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(3) Residential Development Identification Signs** – This subsection was added which incorporates the regulations formerly associated with “Ground Signs.”
- **Section 1111.08(h)(4) Menu Boards** – A maximum area of 48 square feet was added for menu board signs.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(5) Canopy/Marquee/Awning Signs** – Language was added to include awning signs in the heading of the subsection as well as including the sign area for a canopy/marquee/or awning sign in the overall calculation of allowable wall signage. Additional regulation is added which allows for internal or external illumination depending on the district.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(6) Window Signs** – Removed the requirement that window signs are required to denote the identification of the occupant, address of the premises, and use. Language was added which includes the window sign area in the calculation of allowable wall signage and exempts window signs placed by a political jurisdiction or educational facility.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(7) Projecting Signs** – The name of the sign type was changed from “Projecting Nameplate Sign” to “Projecting Sign”, language is added that one projecting sign is permitted per parcel and that projecting signs may only be externally illuminated. Additionally, the requirement that “projecting nameplate signs shall be limited to business signs and identification signs” is removed.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(8) Directional Signs** – The limit on the number of directional signs is removed and the size and height of a directional sign is increased from 2 square feet and 3 feet in height to 9 square feet and 5 feet in height. Additionally, a minimum setback of 5 feet from the public right-of-way and all property lines is included.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(9) Murals** – This subsection was added to regulate murals as signage in the UDO. Murals that contain no advertising or commercial messaging may be permitted on any blank wall or portion of a wall per the approval of the City Manager. Murals that contain advertising or commercial messaging may be permitted per the approval of the Planning Commission.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(10)(C) Electronic Message Center** – Language was added that requires electronic message centers shall be 250 feet from any residential use.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(10)(E) Electronic Message Center** – Language was added that limits the number of electronic message centers to one per parcel or development.

- **Section 1111.08(h)(10)(F) Electronic Message Center** – Language was added reducing the amount of time each message is displayed from 15 seconds to 8 seconds before transitioning.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(10)(G) Electronic Message Center** – Language was added prohibiting streaming or full-motion videos.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(10)(I) Electronic Message Center** – Language was added requiring electronic message centers be equipped with automatic dimmer controls which trigger during sunset and sunrise.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(10)(J) Electronic Message Center** – Language was added regulating the maximum illumination for electronic message centers during daylight, dusk, and dawn.
- **Section 1111.08(h)(10)(K) Electronic Message Center** – Language is added prohibiting electronic message centers in the Downtown Districts.
- **Section 1111.08(i)(3) Maintenance** – This subsection was added which regulates the maintenance of permanent signs.
- **Section 1111.08(k) Lighting** – This subsection was added which prohibits LED, neon tubing and string lights that are being used as building accent lighting or window trimming.
- **Section 1111.08(l)(1) Temporary Sign Permits** – This subsection was added which requires a permit for all temporary signs, unless specifically stated otherwise.
- **Section 1111.08(l)(2) Single-Family Residential Temporary Signs** – This subsection was added which allows each single-family residential property with a maximum of three non-illuminated signs at any one time that are 6 square feet in area and 4 feet in height.
- **Section 1111.08(f)(6) Garage Sale Signs** – This existing subsection was removed.
- **Section 1111.08(l)(3) Real Estate Signs** – The existing real estate sign regulations were modified to allow for one non-illuminated sign per street frontage that are 32 square feet and 6 feet in height. Real estate signs are permitted to be ground, wall, or window signs.
- **Section 1111.08(f)(12) Property Signs** – This existing subsection was removed.
- **Section 1111.08(f)(16) Security Signs** – This existing subsection was removed.
- **Section 1111.08(l)(5) Construction Signs** – The existing language was simplified to remove the required content of construction signs and to simplify and clarify the requirements for construction signs for different types of development.
- **Section 1111.08(l)(11) Prohibited Temporary Signs** – This subsection was added to clearly state the types of temporary signs that are prohibited within the City of Franklin. New types of temporary signs added to this list include:
  - Flutter flags;

- Human signs;
  - Snipe signs; and
  - Vehicle signs.
- **Section 1111.08(l)(12) Signs in the Public Right-of-Way** – Language added which specifically requires temporary signage placed in the public right-of-way to be approved by the City Manager.