

Chapter 18.52

SIGNAGE

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18.52.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide regulation of all signage in Lake Forest Park in order to promote and protect the public health, welfare and safety, to protect and promote property values, to protect and promote an aesthetically pleasing physical appearance of the city, to provide for more open space, to protect and promote an attractive business climate in the city and to provide uniformity of appearance in signage and in regulation of signage where appropriate. It is further intended to reduce sign and advertising obstructions and distractions that may contribute to traffic accidents, to reduce visual clutter and to curb the deterioration of natural beauty and community environment. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.020 Definitions.*

For purposes of this chapter, the definitions of words and terms shall be as provided in this title, this chapter and as defined in the International Building Code, current edition, as adopted by the state of Washington.

A. “Celebration displays” are temporary signs, banners, posters, fluttering devices, balloons, and pennants used solely for the purpose of announcing the opening of a new business, celebration of business anniversaries or announcing major sales. No balloon may exceed three cubic feet. No celebration shall commence prior to the start of the celebration. The notice shall specify the first and last days of the celebration.

B. “Changing message signs” are signs in which a change of message is made by means of moving or digitally changing letters or numbers or combinations thereof, such as clocks and electronic signs indicating time, date and temperature. No messages other than date, time and/or temperature are permitted on changing message signs.

C. “Construction signs” are nonilluminated signs which identify the architects, engineers, planners, contractors or other professional individuals or firms involved with a construction or remodel project or which announce the character or purpose of a project but which do not advertise any product.

D. “Freestanding sign” means a sign standing directly on the ground or having one or more supports standing directly on the ground, and being detached from any building or fence.

E. “Incidental signs” are signs of a noncommercial nature, without advertising, intended primarily for the convenience of the public, that do not exceed a maximum area of two square feet. Incidental signs include:

1. Nonflashing signs designating street addresses, restrooms, hours of operation, entrances and exits to buildings and parking lots, help wanted signs, bus stop and bus route signs, public telephones and the like;
2. Property control signs such as “no trespassing” signs, “no soliciting” signs, towing signs, “no dumping” signs and the like;
3. Plaques, tablets or inscriptions of an historical character which are an integral part of a building or are attached flat to the face of a building, walkway or street;

4. Newspaper boxes attached to mailbox posts which include the name of the newspaper; and

5. Temporary signs in RM and RS zones identifying noncommercial events such as private picnics, birthdays and the like.

A maximum of two incidental signs per business can include the names and/or logo of the business. Political signs and commercial signs such as yard sale signs, real estate signs and the like are subject to the specific provisions of this chapter relating to them.

F. “Land use notice action signs” are signs notifying the public of proposed site alterations and which are required to be posted.

G. “Noncommercial identity signs” are signs which identify the city, parks, public utility or service districts, places of worship, schools, community recreational clubs and areas and residential communities within the city or provide public service, location or educational information. Identity signs may not be directly illuminated but may have indirect illumination on them. A noncommercial identity sign may not exceed 32 square feet per side or have balloons, flags, festoons, pennants or the like attached. Such signs must be placed upon the property which they identify except as provided in LFPMP 18.52.040(A).

H. “Off-premises signs” are any sign, such as a billboard, which displays a message which is not incidental to the current use of the property on which it is located.

I. “Open house signs” are signs of an A-frame or sandwich-type construction, which may include a real estate company’s name and logo and the words “open house” and having a directional symbol, not exceeding six square feet in size.

J. “Political signs” are signs which advertise or promote a political candidate(s) for public elective office, promote a political party, or promote a position on a public issue or ballot issue. A sign which advertises or promotes a negative position of a political candidate, political party or public issue or ballot issue is a political sign.

K. “Real estate signs” are temporary signs not to exceed six square feet per side, which may be one- or two-sided, advertising the real estate upon which it is located, or a portion thereof, for sale, lease or rent.

L. “Sandwich board signs” are advertising signs constructed of two boards or other flat-surfaced materials hinged or otherwise connected at one end (i.e., A-frame) which may not exceed 12 square feet per side. Balloons, flags, festoons, pennants, and the like may not be attached to any sandwich board sign. Sandwich board signs must be placed on the ground; they cannot be elevated or suspended above the ground.

M. “Seasonal signs” means reasonable seasonal decorations of a noncommercial nature within an appropriate holiday season or during a festival as long as such seasonal signs are removed promptly at the end of the holiday season or festival.

N. “Sign area” for letters or symbols painted or mounted directly on walls and awnings shall be calculated by measuring the smallest single rectangle which will enclose the combined letters and symbols. Sign area for freestanding signs and signs contained entirely within a cabinet and mounted on a wall, roof or monument shall be calculated by measuring the entire area of the cabinet. When calculating sign square footage, the measurement of a sign’s dimension shall be only with respect to its physical dimensions and not include the distance it hangs from the ground or the size of its supports.

O. “Sign height” means the vertical distance, from the average level of the undisturbed soil at the base of the sign, measured to the highest point of the sign.

P. “Signs” are any visible communication device, structure or fixture, stationary or mobile, including supporting and component parts, which are visible from any right-of-way, using graphics, letters, figures, symbols, trademarks, pennants, moving or fluttering devices, including balloons, or written copy. Painted wall designs or patterns which do not represent a product, commodity, service or registered trademark, and which do not identify the user, are not signs. Official notices and informational materials erected and maintained in the discharge of a governmental function are not considered signs for the purposes of this chapter. When calculating sign square footage, the

measurement of a sign's dimension shall be only with respect to its physical dimensions and not include the distance it hangs from the ground or the size of its supports.

Q. "Special event signs" are signs advertising the occurrence of a community event such as a school bazaar, fundraising car wash, community picnic, etc. There are no size limitations on special event signs. Yard sale signs are not special event signs.

R. "Street light banner" is a sign that is made of nonrigid material secured in a rigid frame on all four corners which is placed upon or attached to a street light pole or utility pole in a manner that does not create a traffic or other safety hazard.

S. "Yard sale signs" are any signs which may not exceed six square feet on each of two sides of a temporary nature advertising a garage or yard sale of personal belongings. Home occupations permitted by this title may not utilize yard sale signs to advertise, promote or sell their goods or services. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 810 § 1, 2000; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

*Code reviser's note: Section 2 of Ord. 935 provides as follows: "Sections 18.52.020(R), 18.52.070(K) and 18.52.070(L) shall be repealed effective midnight, December 31, 2007."

18.52.030 Illegal signs and removal.

Any sign not expressly provided for in this chapter shall be illegal. All illegal signs must be removed by the person placing them or by the person, business or entity benefited by the illegal sign. However, the city of Lake Forest Park may remove any illegal sign within its jurisdiction. Signs so removed may be released to the sign owner or other responsible person upon payment of a \$25.00 removal fee. Removed signs which are unclaimed after 30 days may be destroyed by the city. Removal of an illegal sign by the city does not relieve the person responsible for paying accrued fines therefor. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.040 Exemptions.

The following signs are, except as set forth in LFPMC 18.52.050, and except for signs in the right-of-way, exempt from regulation:

A. Incidental signs and noncommercial identity signs; provided, that noncommercial identity signs which identify the city or its public parks may be placed in the public right-of-way.

B. Political signs in all zones except public rights-of-way; provided, that all political signs must be removed within five days of the election in which the political candidate or public issue or ballot issue is decided; and provided further, that political signs advertising or promoting a political party must be removed within five days after each general election.

C. Seasonal signs.

D. Construction signs; provided, that there may not be more than one construction sign on each public right-of-way upon which the project fronts and not more than two construction signs in total; and provided further, that no construction sign shall exceed 12 square feet in area per side and not more than six feet in height. All construction signs must be removed within one day of initial occupancy or one day of completion of the project; whichever is the last to occur.

E. Land use action notice signs.

F. Exterior and interior signs or displays not intended to be visible from streets or public rights-of-way, signs in the interior of a building not facing a window, window displays and point of purchase advertising displays such as vending machines.

G. Sculptures, fountains, benches, lighting, mosaics, landscaping and other street furniture which do not incorporate advertising or identification.

H. Poles erected for the purpose of displaying patriotic flags and such flags.

I. Real estate and open house signs on private property; provided, that there may not be more than one real estate sign and one open house sign on each public right-of-way upon which the property fronts and not more than two real estate signs and two open house signs on such property in total; and provided further, that no real estate sign or open house sign shall exceed six square feet in area per side and not more than six feet in height in RM and RS zones and 16 square feet in area per side and not more than six feet in height in CC, BN and TC zones; and provided further, that all real estate signs must be removed within five days of the property being closed, leased or rented, as the case may be, and all open house signs must be removed by 7:00 p.m. of the last day that the property is being shown.

J. Traffic and pedestrian signs and signals, signs required by law, street and governmental directional signs, official public notices and governmental flags. Other than as set forth, signs of governmental agencies and facilities, including the city of Lake Forest Park, shall comply with this chapter.

K. Service, fraternal, religious and similar organizations located in the city may erect signs at their cost at the entrances to the city as follows: there shall be one standard jointly shared by all such subject organizations no higher than 10 feet that shall carry all the signs for each subject organization at each principal arterial entrance, and each subject organization's sign, emblem or symbol shall be no more than two square feet per side in sign area. Placement of such standards must be approved in advance by the city's engineer and by the planning director. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 810 § 2, 2000; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.050 Signs in RM and RS zones.

A. All residences shall display the postal address of that property. The display may be lighted but not flashing and shall be clearly visible from the public right-of-way. If the display is to be placed upon the residence, the numbers must be no less than four inches in height and of a contrasting color to the residence.

B. Yard sale signs on private property; provided, that yard sale signs may only be erected one day prior to the first day of the sale and must be removed within 24 hours of the end of the last day of the sale; and provided further, that yard sale signs to be held on any property may not be posted for more than a total of six days per month.

C. No home occupation otherwise permitted by this title may erect or post any sign advertising or promoting that home occupation.

D. The following additional signs are permitted in RM zoned properties:

1. One sign, lighted or unlighted, nonflashing, on the outside wall of the main building, which shall be flat against the wall and have an area of not greater than 40 square feet.
2. A detached sign, lighted or unlighted, nonflashing, having an area not greater than 30 square feet per side and a sign height of not more than six feet on which both faces may be utilized. Such signs must be securely mounted on the ground on which they rest. On corner lots, one such sign may be placed facing each street.

E. Fluttering signs, including balloons, festoons, pennants and flags (other than official flags of political entities and a single flag identifying the project or owner), and off-premises signs are prohibited; provided, that such fluttering signs are permitted on temporary incidental signs in RM and RS zones identifying noncommercial events such as private picnics, birthdays and the like.

F. Churches are permitted to attach readerboard signs to their outside walls and to place sandwichboard-type signs on their property on days of service.

G. For any zone, the city shall determine the square footage of a sign that is painted on or attached directly to a wall, roof, monument, or support column by its sign area as defined herein. Where a sign is limited to square feet, on one or both sides, square footage shall be determined by sign area. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.060 Signs permitted in CC and BN zones.

A. In BN zones, two single-faced or one double-faced sign is permitted, not to exceed a total of 60 square feet per side, attached to the building wall and advertising the business conducted therein, or the goods and services available therein.

B. In the CC zone, for each street or parking lot on which a business fronts, a single-faced sign on the exterior wall, gable or awning fronting of that business is permitted. If the exterior sign is on the exterior wall, its size must be the lesser of: (1) 150 square feet per side; or (2) the greater of that amount in square footage which is a factor of eight tenths (0.8) of that business' linear street or parking lot frontage or 75 square feet per side; provided, that stand-alone buildings in the CC zone are entitled to signs of not more than 75 square feet per side irrespective of linear frontage; and provided further, that businesses which occupy in excess of 20,000 square feet of space may have a single exterior sign of not more than 250 square feet per side on each street or parking lot frontage. If the exterior sign is on a gable or awning, its size must be less than 40 square feet. Signage entitlements under the foregoing sentence for any frontage may not be counted for entitlement on any other frontage. Businesses that share space must share signage entitlements under this provision.

C. In both CC and BN zones, one freestanding, single-faced or one double-faced sign not exceeding 30 square feet in area per side and a sign height not exceeding 20 feet, securely fastened to the ground.

D. In both CC and BN zones, one changing message.

E. In both CC and BN zones, one sandwich board sign may be placed on the business' property advertising special sale commodities or services and displayed only when the advertised business is open for business.

F. In both CC and BN zones, signs of any kind in windows viewable from any public right-of-way may not cover more than 50 percent of the window area except for celebration displays.

G. For automobile service stations, a single freestanding fuel price and fuel brand identification sign, which may be lighted but nonflashing, securely anchored to the ground. Additional advertising of car wash services and other fuels sold may be added to the fuel price and fuel brand identification sign but no other message or device may be attached to the fuel price and fuel brand identification sign.

H. All signs permitted by this section shall be nonflashing, with no movement or simulated movement, except for changing message signs, and shall be located as not to produce glare on neighboring residential properties or interfere with traffic, traffic signals or traffic signs.

I. Fluttering signs, including balloons, festoons, pennants and flags (other than official flags of political entities and a single flag identifying the project or owner) of a permanent nature are prohibited. However, in CC zones, celebration displays are permitted for periods of no more than 14 consecutive days and a total of four times a year. Celebration displays must be used at the site of the business and must be removed at the end of the event or 14-consecutive-day period, whichever is shorter.

J. Off-premises signs are prohibited. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 810 § 3, 2000; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.070 Signs permitted in TC zones.

The planned shopping center in the TC zone is a unique and visible community resource and structure. It is the city's desire that signs in the planned shopping center in the TC zone be aesthetically pleasing, architecturally cohesive with the planned shopping center in the TC zone and with signs of other tenants in the planned shopping center in the TC zone, of superior construction, safe for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic and commercially reasonable.

A. In the TC zone, for each street or parking lot on which a business fronts, a single-faced sign on the exterior wall, gable or awning fronting of that business is permitted. If the exterior sign is on the exterior wall, its size must be the less of (1) 150 square feet per side or (2) the greater of that amount in square footage which is a factor of eight tenths (0.8) of that business' linear street or parking lot frontage or 75 square feet per side; provided, that stand-alone buildings in the TC are entitled to signs of not more than 75 square feet per side irrespective of linear frontage; and provided further, that businesses which occupy in excess of 20,000 square feet of space may have a single exterior sign or not more than 250 square feet per side on each street or parking lot frontage. If the exterior sign is on a gable or awning, its size must be less than 40 square feet. Signage entitlements under the foregoing sentence for any frontage may not be counted for entitlement on any other frontage. Businesses that share space must share signage entitlements under this provision.

B. Each business in the TC zone may have nonilluminated projecting signs hanging from the soffits but each such sign must provide a minimum of seven feet of clearance from the underlying walkway to the bottom of the sign and no such sign may exceed five square feet per side.

C. Each business in the TC zone may have a nonilluminated awning on which may be placed signs for that business so long as the total area of those signs does not exceed 45 percent of the facing of the awning.

D. Signs of any kind in windows viewable from any public right-of-way may not cover more than 50 percent of the window area except for celebration displays.

E. A planned shopping center in the TC zone may display up to two freestanding ground signs, not in excess of 25 square feet in area per side, identifying the name of the shopping center but not the businesses located therein at Northeast 175th and Ballinger Way Northeast, plus one nonilluminated freestanding ground sign at or near Northeast 175th and Ballinger Way Northeast, not to exceed a sign height of 10 feet and 60 square feet in area per side identifying the businesses located therein, plus a single illuminated or nonilluminated freestanding sign at the main entrance off Bothell Way Northeast, not to exceed a sign height of 30 feet and not more than 300 square feet in area per side, which may include identities of one or more of the businesses located in the shopping center. Any nonilluminated sign permitted in this subsection may, notwithstanding the foregoing, be illuminated by one or more separate light(s) cast on it from the ground below. The ground signs shall be of a style, material and design as are compatible with the associated buildings. All ground signs and support elements are to be integrated into a single design.

F. Entrances to buildings in the planned shopping center in the TC zone may have readerboard signs placed on the walls adjacent to the entrance wall or support columns not to exceed 13.5 square feet identifying only the businesses in that building. Readerboard signs shall be limited to two per major public entrance.

G. For automobile service stations, a single freestanding fuel price and fuel brand identification sign, which may be lighted but nonflashing, securely anchored to the ground. Additional advertising of car wash services and other fuels sold may be added to the fuel price and fuel brand identification sign but no other message or device may be attached to the fuel price and fuel brand identification sign.

H. All signs permitted by this section shall be nonflashing, with no movement or simulated movement, except for changing message signs, and shall be located as not to produce glare on neighboring residential properties or interfere with traffic, traffic signals or traffic signs.

I. Fluttering signs, including balloons, festoons, pennants and flags (other than official flags of political entities of a permanent nature) are prohibited. However, celebration displays are permitted for periods of no more than 14 consecutive days and a total of four times a year. Celebration displays must be used at the site of the shopping center and must be removed at the end of the event or 14-consecutive-day period, whichever is shorter.

J. Off-premises signs are prohibited.

K. Temporary sandwich board signs relating to a farmer's market may be permitted for a period not to exceed the operation of the farmer's market, subject to the following requirements:

1. Signs shall only be displayed during the hours the farmer's market is open to the general public, but in any event no earlier than 8:00 a.m. or later than 7:00 p.m. on the day of the market;
2. A maximum of two signs are allowed at each vehicular entrance of the town center zone, not to exceed a total of seven; and one sign is allowed at the pedestrian entrance at the perimeter of the parking lot adjacent to Bothell Way Northeast and Ballinger Way Northeast;
3. Signs shall not be directly or indirectly illuminated;
4. Signs may not block sidewalks or driveways, impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic, or create a hazard to traffic, such as, but not limited to, impeding visibility of oncoming traffic.

L. Streetlight banners may be permitted upon the private light poles within the town center zone. Such streetlight banners may not be used to advertise individual businesses, but may be used year- round to highlight seasonal events such a farmer's market, holiday seasons or other special events within the town center zone subject to compliance with the following requirements:

1. Banners may be mounted on a total of 25 streetlight poles;
2. Two banners may be mounted on each pole and each banner must not exceed the dimensions of two feet by four feet;
3. All banners must be the same size, thematically consistent, and mounted in identical configurations;
4. Banners shall be installed with the bottom of the banner a minimum of 10 feet above the ground;
5. A banner permit may remain valid as long as the locations and the specifications of the banners and the mounting systems do not change, and so long as the banners are maintained in good condition;
6. Application requirements for a banner permit include:
 - a. Information on the design and construction of the mounting system including any engineering calculations demonstrating the mounting system will support the banner;
 - b. Identification of the location of the private light poles on which the banners will be placed; and
 - c. A schedule that indicates when banners will be installed and changed, which gives preference to farmers' market banners during the farmers' market season. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 810 § 4, 2000; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.080 Signs in the public right-of-way.

A. The following signs are permitted in the public right-of-way in Lake Forest Park upon making application for a permit to the planning director; provided, that no sign in a public right-of-way shall create a traffic or other safety hazard; and upon the following conditions:

1. Special Event Signs. A maximum of four special event signs may be posted for a maximum of seven days prior to the event's commencement and upon such other conditions as may be imposed by the planning director. Special event signs must be removed within 24 hours of the termination of the special event.

B. The following signs are permitted in the public right-of-way in Lake Forest Park without a permit being required:

1. Yard Sale Signs. A maximum of two yard sale signs may be posted for a maximum of two days prior to the event's commencement and upon such other conditions as may be imposed by the planning director. Yard sale signs shall be removed within 24 hours of the termination of the yard sale.
2. Real Estate Open House Signs. A maximum of four open house signs per property advertised for a period not to exceed two consecutive days in a calendar month. Such open house signs shall be placed at least three feet from the traveled portion of the right-of-way, shall not be placed on an island, median strip or sidewalk, and shall not create a hazard to traffic. Open house signs shall be permitted to be in place only between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
3. Political Signs. Political signs; provided, that all political signs must be removed within five days of the election in which the political candidate or public issue or ballot issue is decided.
4. Churches may place sandwich-type signs concerning their service on sidewalks on the days of their service.

C. Signs shall not be located in the right-of-way or placed upon or in any way attached to any street or traffic control sign or utility pole in such a manner as to create a traffic or other safety hazard.

D. Signs are not permitted on city-owned property or property leased by the city for public purposes without the permission of the city. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 916, 2004; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 877 § 1, 2002; Ord. 810 § 5, 2000; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.090 Permit application and fees.

All applications for issuance of permits required by this chapter shall be made to the planning director on forms furnished for that purpose and shall be accompanied by the required fee. The applicable fee shall be as provided in the city's fee schedule. The application shall include the applicant's full name, address, signature, location of the signs, types of goods proposed to be sold if applicable, duration of sale if applicable, together with such other information as the planning director deems appropriate. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005; Ord. 905 § 1, 2004; Ord. 773 § 3, 1999)

18.52.100 Violations.

A. A violation of LFPMC 18.52.080 shall be an infraction subject to a fine of \$100.00 a day or portion thereof.

B. A violation of any other section of this chapter shall be an infraction subject to a fine of \$25.00 a day or portion thereof. (Ord. 935 § 1, 2005; Ord. 923 § 1, 2005)