

February 13, 2025

To: City of Whitewater Common Council

RE: Window Signage Code Requirements

The City of Whitewater Common Council recently requested that further research and investigation be done on the current sign requirements for window signage for businesses within the City of Whitewater, as well as possible improvements that could be made to our ordinances.

Title 5, Section 5.20.030 refers to window signage for businesses within the city that hold retail Class A or Class B liquor licenses. This ordinance states that for certain sized windows or clear vision zones there shall be an opening of 75% (only 25% coverage by signs or window coverings); or 50% (50% coverage by signs of window coverings) for businesses that do not have windows 4-7 feet above the floor.

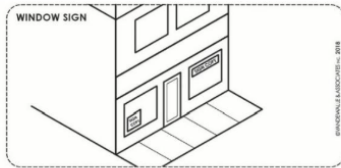
- (3) Any licensed premise shall provide by clear glass window a clear view into the entire licensed premises. Storefront windows must have a clear vision zone starting at four feet from the floor and extending vertically to a point seven feet above the floor on all glass windows. In the clear vision zone, 75% of the windows shall be free of partitions, boxes, stalls, screens, curtains, signs, stickers, or any other devices which shall obstruct the view of the room from the general observation of persons. Licensed premises that have no storefront windows located within the clear vision zone (four to seven feet above the floor) shall have a minimum 50% clear and unobstructed view in those windows.

Title 19, Section 19.54.030 refers to window signage for all businesses in all districts regardless of the licenses they hold for liquor distribution. This ordinance states that signage may not exceed 50% of coverage on each window.

(A) Window Sign Category. A sign located within a building that is attached to the inside face of an exterior window.

The following window sign types are addressed by this chapter:

1. Window Sign. A type of sign that is either painted onto the inside face or exterior of a window, attached to the inside face of an exterior window, or located inside a building within three feet of a window and intended to be viewed from the exterior of the building. Window signs may face toward the outside, the inside, or both.
 - a. A "window" is the total area within a window frame, which may be divided by muntins or mullions. Glass areas divided by walls, piers or columns are considered separate windows.
 - b. Window sign area cannot exceed fifty percent of each individual window glass area on or in which the window signs are located.



Each ordinance is currently active, and although they are similar to one another, they are slightly different. If 50% is a threshold the Whitewater Common Council is agreeable to the ordinances can remain as is. However, many surrounding communities have shown more restrictive window signage requirements. If the Council feels that 50% is too much coverage the zoning administrator would recommend reducing total coverage to 10% for all businesses.

If this is requested, the zoning administrator would modify each ordinance to be consistent with one another. The Title 19 ordinance would first need to go through the PARC for recommendation, and then both ordinances would be heard before the Council. If the current ordinances are sufficient, enforcement on any violations can be pursued.

For any additional questions please contact Allison Schwark, Zoning Administrator, at 262-249-6701.

Sincerely,

Allison Schwark
Code Enforcement Officer
Zoning Administrator
City of Whitewater