

Alexandria Zoning Ordinance Modifications for A-Frame and Digital Signage

- I. Amend definitions section of zoning ordinance to add an item for “digital text and graphic signs” to differentiate them from “animated” or “flashing” signs. Additionally, eliminate the definition for “special advertising,” as this would no-longer be a regulated item:

• **9-102 - Definitions.**

For purposes of this Article IX, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings ascribed to them below, unless the context otherwise indicates:

(A) *Animated sign.* Any sign, the character or appearance of any element or part of which changes by any device, mechanical, electrical or otherwise except for digital text and graphic signs.

~~(K-1) *Digital text and graphic sign.* Any sign that can change its content by way of electronic or mechanical means but maintains a consistent image and does not flash or display any animation or movement other than the occasional changing of text or graphics. Digital text and graphic signs can be in the form of televisions, monitors, and other screens.~~

(O) *Flashing sign.* Any sign consisting of, or illuminated by, flashing or intermittent lights or other lights of changing degrees of intensity, brightness or color, except a sign showing the date, time and/or temperature except for digital text and graphic signs.

~~(HH) *Special advertising.* Advertisement of a product or service which constitutes less than 50 percent of the gross business conducted by the person erecting or displaying the sign either in the building or structure or on the property to which the sign containing the advertisement is affixed.~~

- II. Retain the prohibition for flashing and animated signs, as digital text and graphic signs would be a separate sign category. Also, amend prohibition against portable signs to permit regulated a-frame signs on private property, and amend prohibition against remote signs to correspond with the king street commercial wayfinding program:

• **9-104 - Prohibited signs, marquees and awnings and exceptions.**

The following signs, marquees and awnings are prohibited or are permitted only as specified below, regardless of their location in the city:

(B) *Animated signs.* No such signs may be erected or displayed.

(C) *Flashing signs.* No such signs may be erected or displayed.

(H) *Mobile and portable signs.* No such signs may be erected or displayed. Other than portable signs permitted under Section 9-202(B)(8) and A-Frame signs permitted under Section 9-202 (G)

(M) *Remote signs.* No such sign may be erected or displayed other than Pedestrian-oriented Shopping Street Commercial Wayfinding Program signs permitted under Section 9-202 (F).

III. Delete special advertising regulations:

• 9-105 - Standards for permitted signs, marquees and awnings.

Any sign, marquee or awning otherwise permitted under this Article IX must comply with the following standards:

(A) *Content.*

~~(3) No special advertising may be placed on a sign unless the sign is permitted by this Article IX and the special advertising occupies less than one third of the area of the sign.~~

IV. Amend existing a-frame 'wayfinding' sign regulations to accommodate proposal to use '2-pole, monument' type wayfinding signs instead:

• 9-202 - Commercial zones.

(F) ~~A-frame signs~~ Pedestrian-oriented Shopping Street Commercial Wayfinding Program. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in this ordinance, ~~A-frame a government signage program has been established for the erecting of signs in specially designated locations in the right of way near intersections~~ on King Street to guide pedestrians to businesses within the Central Business District, as defined by Section 8-300; along Mt. Vernon Avenue to guide pedestrians to businesses within the commercial zones along both sides of that street; and at other pedestrian-oriented shopping streets as determined by the City Manager, provided they comply with the following provisions:

(a) ~~Application process and City Installation Plan.~~ An application for ~~an A-frame~~ a permit for an installation of a sign component in an installed wayfinding sign structure shall be submitted. ~~The Director of Planning and Zoning may approve the application after determining that the proposed sign component will of the correct size and shape to correspond with the sign structure include~~ The City is to develop a plan for reasonably depicting the location, size, ~~text,~~ appearance and method of installation of the proposed sign structure to be located in the public right of way, and such additional information as the director may reasonably require to ensure that sign structures are suitable for the pedestrian vitality in the pedestrian-oriented shopping street and its vicinity and to ensure that the sign structure would advance City goals., and that there is adequate space remaining within the public right of way to facilitate safe circulation of pedestrian traffic. No material change to the approved plan shall be made without prior written approval by the director.

(b) *Locations.* A maximum of four signs may be located on any one intersection, one on each corner.

(c) *Eligible businesses.* For each sign, eligible businesses include restaurants, retail uses, and retail oriented businesses, which include restaurants and retail and personal services uses, as those terms are defined by this ordinance, located on adjacent blockface on a street within the Central Business District, which street intersects with or is parallel to King Street.

(d) *Number of signs.* A maximum of one A-frame sign structure is permitted for all eligible businesses on any eligible blockface.

(e) *Size of sign.* Signs components installed by each business may not exceed the space available for installation as determined by the Director of Transportation and Environmental and Services and the Director of Planning and Zoning. The sign structure shall not exceed a size of 42 inches in height and 24 30 inches in width.

(f) *Illumination.* Illuminated signs are prohibited.

(g) *Pedestrian safety.* Pedestrian safety shall be preserved through the placement and securing of signs so as to permit safe and adequate pedestrian thoroughway along the sidewalk, crossing of streets, entry and alighting from cars and buses, and access to curb ramps.

(h) *Temporary signs.* All signs, including installation materials, placed in the right of way shall be temporary and shall be readily removable without any damage to the surface of the right of way.

(i) *Compliance with law.* All signs shall comply with all applicable city, state and federal laws and regulations.

(j) *Director requirements.* Signs shall comply with such additional reasonable terms and conditions as the director may require and include in the permit.

V. Create a new section 'G' to regulate A-Frame signs that would be permitted on private property:

(G) A-frame signs in front of and on the property of individual businesses. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in this ordinance, A-frame signs may be permitted only outside of the Parker Gray Historic District and outside the Old and Historic Alexandria District and only on private property in commercial districts provided they comply with the following provisions:

(a) Permitted locations. An A-Frame Sign shall only be located on private property that is the same property as the business using the sign. If the sign is in a walkway, it shall be located in a manner that ensures a minimum lateral walkway clearance of five (5) feet for pedestrian travel. Each sign shall be located within 15 feet of the front facade of the establishment the sign serves. A permit is required for this type of sign.

(b) Number of signs. A maximum of one sign is permitted per business.

(c) Size of sign. Signs may not exceed 42 inches in height and 24 inches in width.

(d) Illumination. Illuminated signs are prohibited.

(e) Pedestrian safety. Pedestrian safety shall be preserved through the placement and securing of signs so as to permit safe and adequate pedestrian thoroughway along the walkways, crossing of streets or parking areas, entry and alighting from cars and buses, and access to curb ramps. No sign is permitted to encroach in the line of vision clearance for motor vehicles, and such signs shall be positioned a minimum of fifteen feet from a driveway or roadway intersection. Braces are required to ensure that the sign legs remain adequately spread to prevent it from falling, and the sign shall be a minimum weight of 20 pounds properly balanced to minimize the incidence of being blown over by the wind that it would not blow away in the wind.

(f) Temporary signs. All signs, including installation materials shall be temporary and shall be readily removable without any damage to the surface of the right of way.

(g) Compliance with law. All signs shall comply with all applicable city, state and federal laws and regulations.

(h) Time Limits. No A-Frame sign is permitted outdoors anytime other than the operating hours of the establishment that the sign advertises.

(i) Materials and Design. Only high quality, durable materials shall be used. For example slate, marker board, stainless steel, aluminum, aluminum composite, laminate plastic or medium density overlay plywood painted with enamel paint are permitted.

VI. Create a new section to permit and regulate digital text and graphic signs only in limited applications:

• 9-501 – Standards for Digital Text and Graphic Signs.

(A) Permitted uses. Digital text and graphic signs are permitted only for governmental signage.

(B) Brightness standards. The sign shall not increase the light level by more than 0.3 foot-candle above ambient light levels at any given time when measured 30-feet from the face of the sign in any direction. The interval time of change for content is permitted to be no longer than 1 second.

(C) Existing digital text and graphic signs approved before (DATE OF PASSAGE) are non-complying signs if they do not comply with the standards of this section of the Ordinance.