

# AREA OF SPECIAL SIGN CONTROL - LISTENING SESSION

July 13, 2022



## Agenda

- ❑ Background
  - What is an Area of Special Sign Control (ASSC)?
  - What is the Design Manual?
- ❑ Goals
  - Goal of listening sessions
  - Overall goal
  - Next Steps
- ❑ Discussion
  - Topics for discussion



## What is an ASSC?

### General Information on ASSC's

#### § 17-501 - Purpose

*The City recognizes that certain commercial areas present a unique character that could be enhanced with the application of sign standards that depart from the requirements of this title. In these circumstances, these standards would be considered supportive of the commercial area. Under this subtitle, the Planning Commission may recommend and the City Council may approve the designation of an area that meets certain criteria as an Area of Special Signage. The Planning Commission may then approve a specific Signage Plan for that Area of Special Signage Control.*



Baltimore City Department of Planning



## What is an ASSC?

### General Information on ASSC's
































#### § 17-502. Applicability.

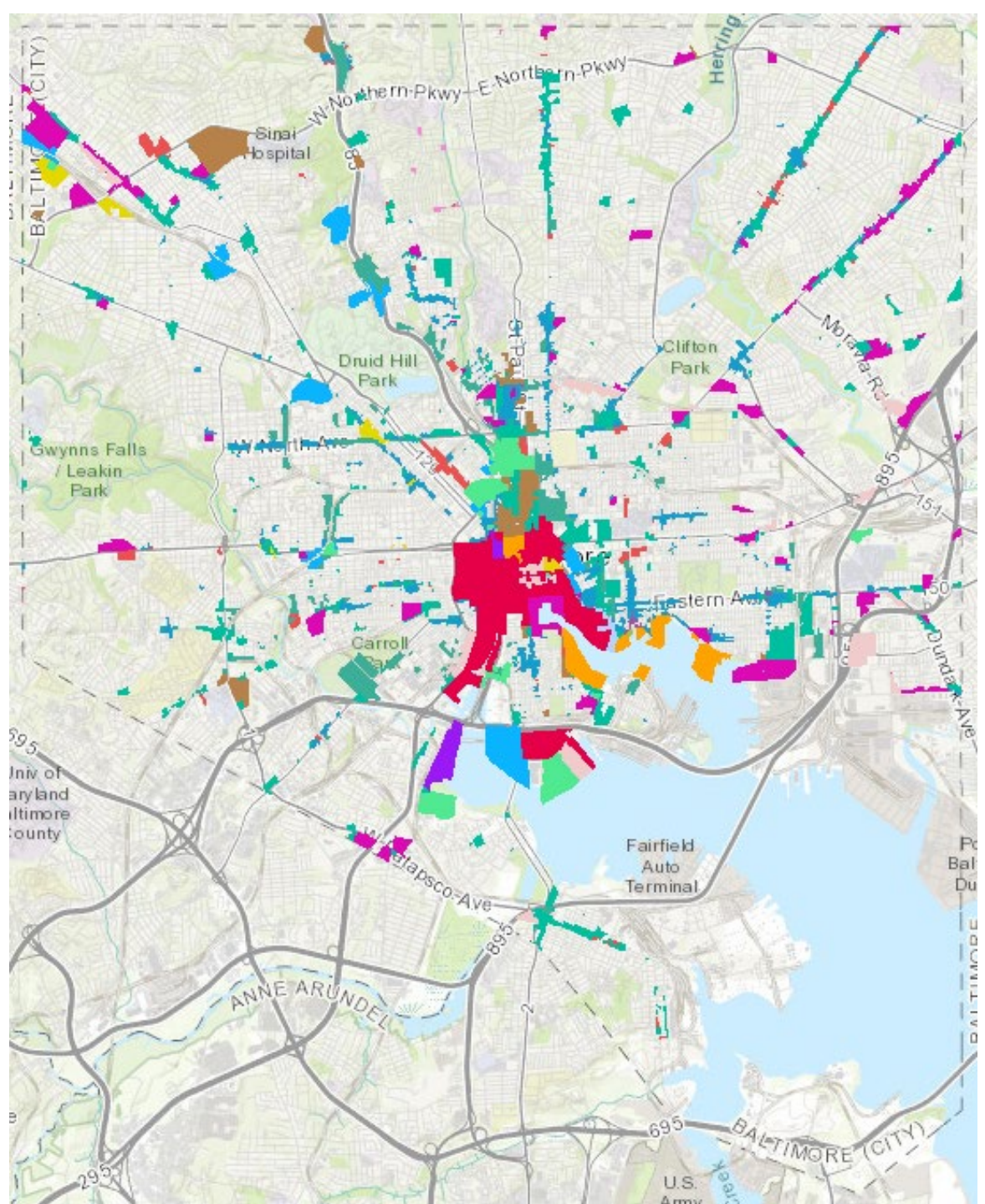
##### *(a) Districts.*

- 1) *An Area of Special Signage Control may be applied for in the C-1, C-1-E, C-1-VC, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, I-MU, OR, or TOD Zoning Districts.*
- 2) *The entire PC Zoning District, as mapped on the adopted Zoning Map, as of June 5, 2017, is designated an Area of Special Signage Control, unless the boundaries of the Area of Special Signage Control are otherwise amended per § 17-505.*



# Zoning Districts where ASSC's are permitted

- |                                                                                    |           |                                                                                   |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
|    | C-1       |  | OR-1      |
|    | C-1-E     |  | OR-1/R-MU |
|    | C-1-E/W-1 |  | OR-2      |
|    | C-1-VC    |  | OR-2/R-MU |
|    | C-2       |  | PC-1      |
|    | C-2/W-1   |  | PC-2      |
|    | C-3       |  | PC-3      |
|    | C-4       |  | PC-4      |
|    | C-5-TO/AU |  | TOD-1     |
|    | C-5-IH    |  | TOD-2     |
|    | C-5-HT    |  | TOD-3     |
|    | C-5-HS    |  | TOD-4     |
|    | C-5-G     |  | TOD-4/W-2 |
|    | C-5-DC    |                                                                                   |           |
|  | C-5-DC/AU |                                                                                   |           |
|  | C-5-DE    |                                                                                   |           |
|  | C-5-TO    |                                                                                   |           |
|  | I-MU      |                                                                                   |           |



## What is an ASSC?

### General Information on ASSC's

#### § 17-502. Applicability.

##### *(b) Size of Area.*

- (1) An Area of Special Signage Control must include multiple properties and cover an area that has at least 600 linear feet of street frontage.*
- (2) The block faces may either be located directly across the street from each other or adjacent to each other along the street.*
- (3) The block faces may be in any 1 or combination of the zoning districts identified in subsection (a) of this section.*



# What is an ASSC?

SIGN TYPES BY ZONING DISTRICT *		ZONING DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS			AREA OF SPECIAL SIGNAGE CONTROL (ASSC)		
	Approval Method	Maximum Sign Area	Height, Width, etc.	Maximum Quantity	Sign Types Allowable	Maximum % Deviation	Quantity Deviation
<b>C-2</b>							
A-Frame	A	8 sq. ft. per side	Max. Hgt. 4 ft.	1 per tenant w/ direct ground floor access / Corner tenant 1 per street frontage	Not Eligible		
Attention-Getting Device	A				Not Eligible		
Awning or Canopy Sign & Open-Structural Framework Sign	A	2 sq. ft. per linear foot of awning, canopy, or frame width		1 per lot	X	50%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Banner Sign (Projecting)	A	24 sq. ft.		1 per lot	X	50%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Billboard	ASSC Only				Requirements per § 17-406		
Electronic Sign (Category I)	A	15 sq. ft.	Per sign type used	1 per lot	X	50%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Electronic Sign (Category II)	ASSC Only	50 sq. ft.	Per sign type used		X	50%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Electronic Sign (Category III)	ASSC Only	300 sq. ft.	Per sign type used		X	50%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Freestanding (Monument)	A	32 sq. ft.	Max. Hgt. 6 ft.	1 per lot	X	50%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Freestanding (Pole)	A	16 sq. ft.	Minimum Pole Hgt. 10 ft. / Max. Sign	1 per lot	X	50%	Per Approved Signage Plan



# What is an ASSC?

<i>SIGN TYPES BY ZONING DISTRICT *</i>		<i>ZONING DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS</i>			<i>AREA OF SPECIAL SIGNAGE CONTROL (ASSC)</i>		
<i>C-5-DC (cont'd)</i>	<i>Approval Method</i>	<i>Maximum Sign Area</i>	<i>Height, Width, etc.</i>	<i>Maximum Quantity</i>	<i>Sign Types Allowable</i>	<i>Maximum % Deviation</i>	<i>Quantity Deviation</i>
Banner Sign (Wall Mounted)	A	120 sq. ft.	Below parapet	1 per lot	X	75%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Billboard	ASSC Only				Requirements per § 17-406		
Electronic Sign (Category I)	A	15 sq. ft.	Per sign type used	1 per lot	X	75%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Electronic Sign (Category II)	A	50 sq. ft.	Per sign type used	2 per lot	X	75%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Electronic Sign (Category III)	ASSC Only	750 sq. ft.	Per sign type used		X	75%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Electronic Sign (Category IV)	ASSC Only	5,000 sq. ft.	Per sign type used		X	75%	Per Approved Signage Plan
Electronic Sign (Category V)	ASSC Only	10,5000 sq. ft.	Per sign type used		X	75%	Per Approved Signage Plan





# What is an ASSC?

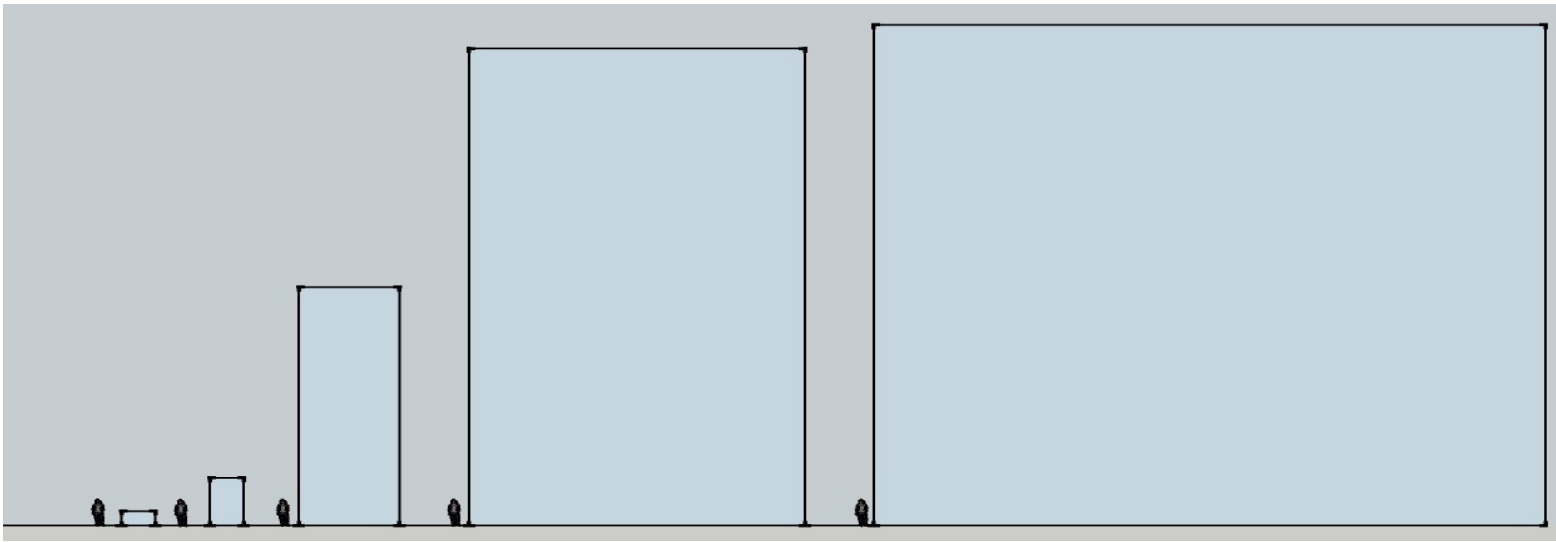
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# What is an ASSC?

## Electronic Sign Categories

	Max Area	Sign Type Allowed	Approval Method
Category I	15 sq. ft.	Freestanding or Wall	Allowable
Category II	50. sq. ft.	Freestanding, Projecting or Wall	Allowable or ASSC
Category III	750 sq. ft.	Freestanding, Roof or Wall	ASSC Only
Category IV	5,000 sq. ft.	Freestanding, Roof or Wall	ASSC Only
Category V	10,500 sq. ft.	Wall	ASSC Only



# What is an ASSC?

## General Information on ASSC's and Billboards

§ 17-406. Billboards.

a) General prohibitions.

1. Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Code, the erection, conversion, placement, or construction of new billboards, static or digital, is prohibited.
2. No billboard may have audio speakers or any audio component.

b) Digital billboard defined. In this section, “digital billboard” means any billboard that is also an electronic sign.

c) New billboards..

1. **New billboards are only allowed in an Area of Special Signage Control.**

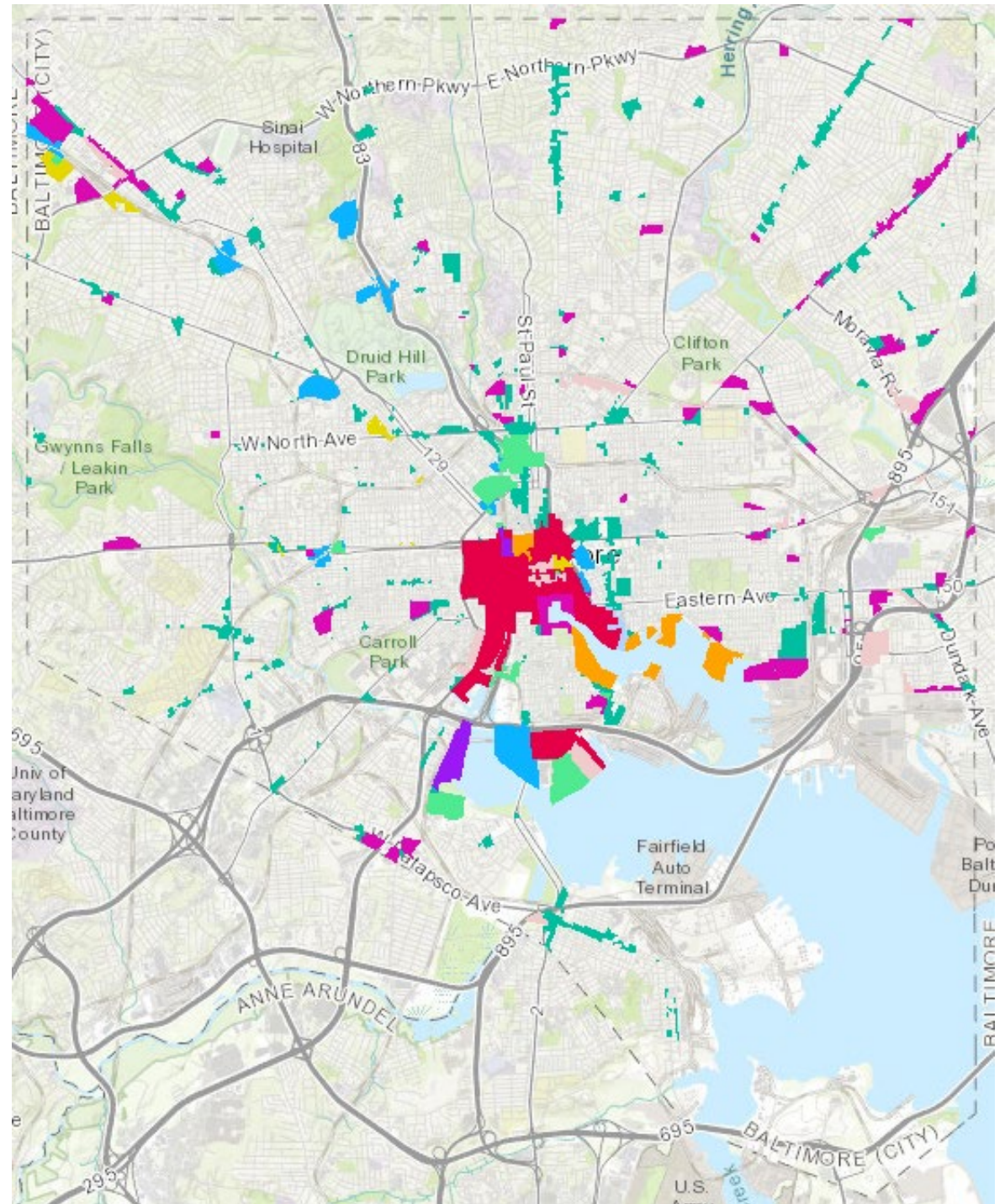
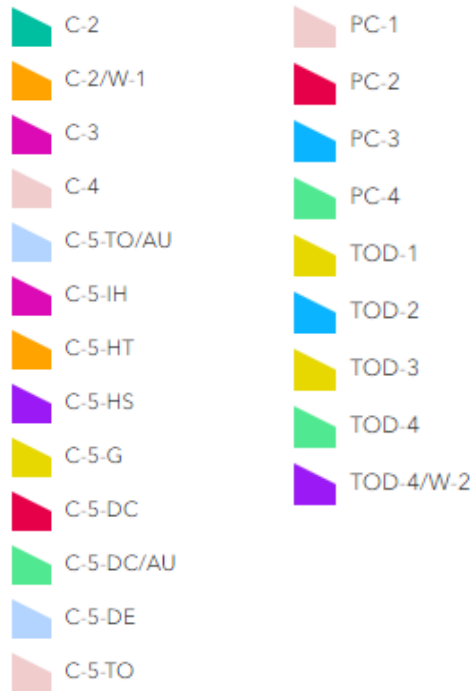
2. In addition:

- a. new non-digital billboards may only be located in a C-1, C-1-E, C-1-VC, C-5-DC, or PC Zoning District and may not exceed 50 square feet; and
- b. new digital billboards are subject to the following requirements:
  - a. **they may only be located in a C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, TOD-4, or PC Zoning District;**
  - b. digital animation, streaming video, or images that move or give the appearance of movement are only allowed as described in the approved Signage Plan; and
  - c. all digital billboards must have ambient light monitors that automatically adjust the brightness level of the billboard based on ambient light conditions.

c. Billboards may only be integrated into any other sign type listed in Table 17-201: Sign Regulations for that zoning district.



# Zoning Districts where Billboards are permitted within ASSC's



## What is an ASSC?

### How is an ASSC created?

ASSC's are designated through a City Council Ordinance. That ordinance is reviewed by the Planning Commission, who are tasked with making a recommendation to the City Council.

The Planning Commission may recommend approval of the application so long as the findings of fact are met; that the proposed Area of Special Sign Control –

- Would not increase the likelihood of traffic congestion or distraction;
- Would not add to the visual clutter in the area; and
- Would not be incongruous with the existing or contemplated design of the area



## What is an ASSC?

### How is an ASSC created?

Following the designation of the Area of Special Sign Control, the Planning Commission must approve the Signage Plan before any signs may be erected in the ASSC. The Signage Plan must conform with the Zoning Code and must include the following;

- (1) a list of what sign types are being sought in the Area of Special Sign Control;
- (2) the location and number of signs per lot or building;
- (3) the maximum dimensions per sign; and
- (4) the percentage deviation being sought in the area or height of the sign or in the maximum cumulative area of signs from what is allowed by right as provided in Table 17-201: Sign Regulations and Table 17-306: Maximum Cumulative Area of Signs. Standards of Planning Commission review



## What is an ASSC?

Planning Commission may approve the Sign Plan so long as the findings of fact are met, that the Signage Plan -

- Would not increase the likelihood of traffic congestion or distraction;
- Would not add to the visual clutter in the area; and
- Would not be incongruous with the existing or contemplated design of the area



# What is the Design Manual?

## Subtitle 4 – Design Review

### § 4-405 – Applicability

(a) In general. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, design review is required for the following types of development:

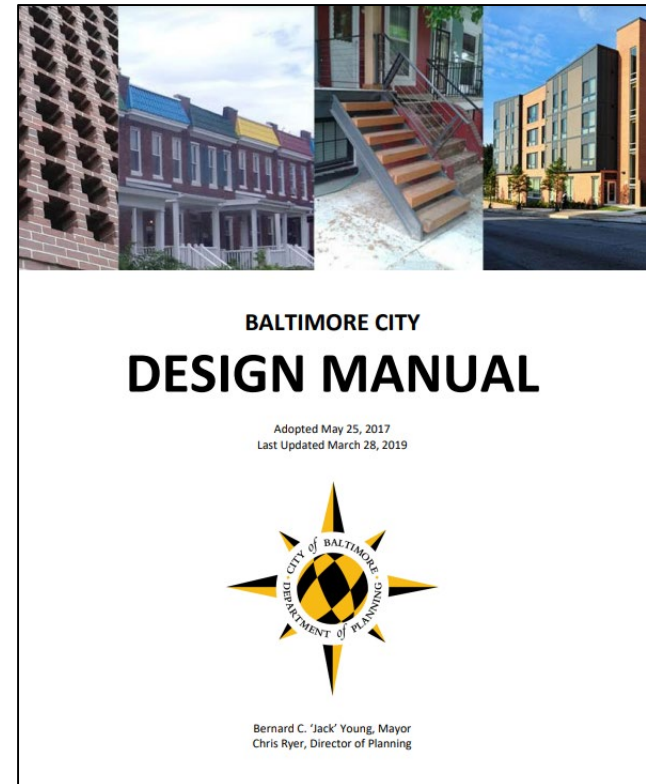
(12) any Signage Plan and any sign, but without regard to its copy or message, within an Area of Special Sign Control;





## What is the Design Manual?

The Design Manual was developed in conjunction with and established in the Zoning Code. This manual outlines the design standards and applicable components for physical construction within the identified zoning districts. Including a section for Signs.



# What is the Design Manual?

## Existing Design Guidelines for Signs in the Design Manual

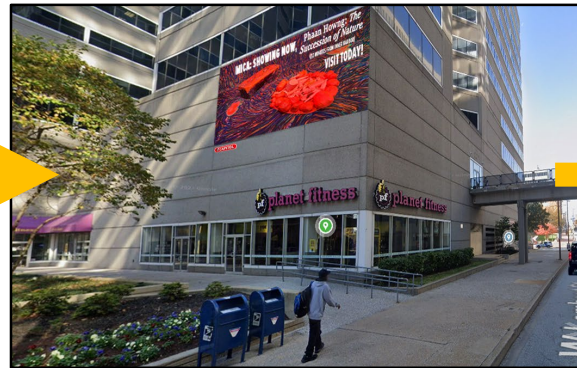
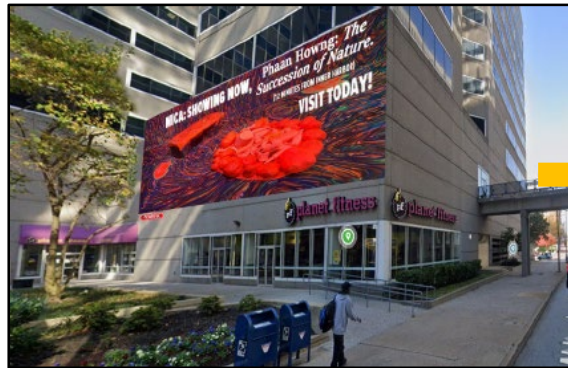
- A. All materials, colors, size of components, associated lighting, freestanding walls, and site improvements associated with an electronic sign are subject to design review to be in keeping with the building or site with which they are located.
- B. Size, shape, letter style(s), colors, and method of installation of all signs must be compatible with the architecture of the building and the neighboring structures. Design of signs by graphic designers is encouraged. Design drawings of all proposed signs, showing their location on the building façade, must be submitted for approval prior to fabrication and installation.
- C. Materials employed for construction of signs must be durable and weather-resistant, fabricated and installed by qualified and experienced mechanics, and maintained in good repair.
- D. Signs must be designed in a manner so that they do not interfere with important architectural details (e.g., windows, cornices, carved friezes, arches) of the building. Placement entirely on a flat portion of façade or an entirely within the confines of an opening and lined up with architectural details or elements is preferred.



# Design Review Examples from North Harbor



124 Market Place before and after design comments



100 S Charles iterations responding to design comments



# Goals

## Goals of Listening Sessions

- Understand concerns of communities and stakeholders,
- Incorporate comments into proposed Design Guidelines,
- Create a transparent process

## Goal for the Design Guidelines

- Develop evaluation criteria for design review for Signage Plans and signs for ASSCs.



## Next Steps

- July - Continue to meet with stakeholders as needed.
- July/August – Staff to draft guidelines.
- August/September - Share draft with stakeholders and request comments within two weeks.
- September – Brief Planning Commission and finalize guidelines
- October – Present at Planning Commission for adoption.



## Discussion Agenda

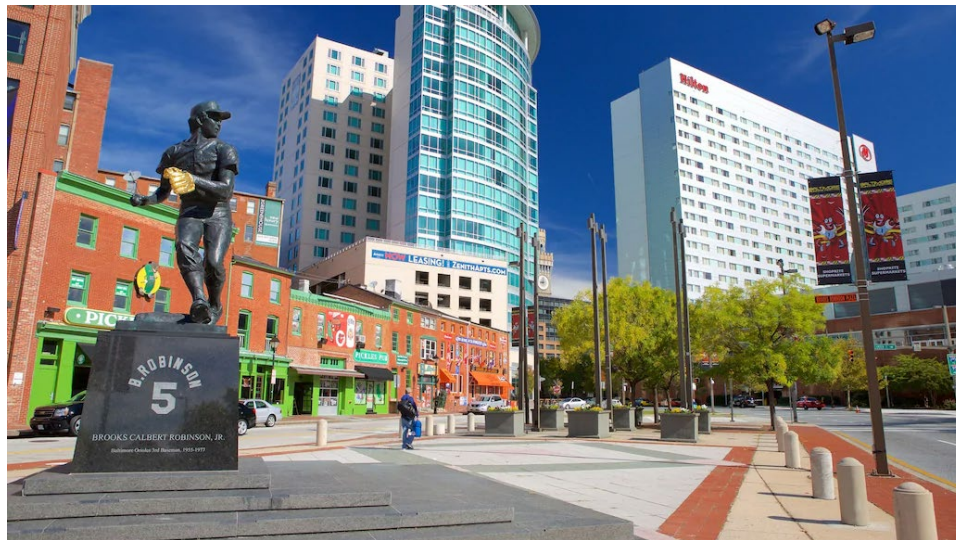
- Definition of visual clutter (~10 min)
- Clarify “compatibility with architectural design” (~10 min)
- Guidelines limiting impact to residential properties (~10 min)
- Protection of view corridors (~10 min)
- Further limits based on Sign Type or Zoning District (~10 min)
- Additional Comments (~10 min)



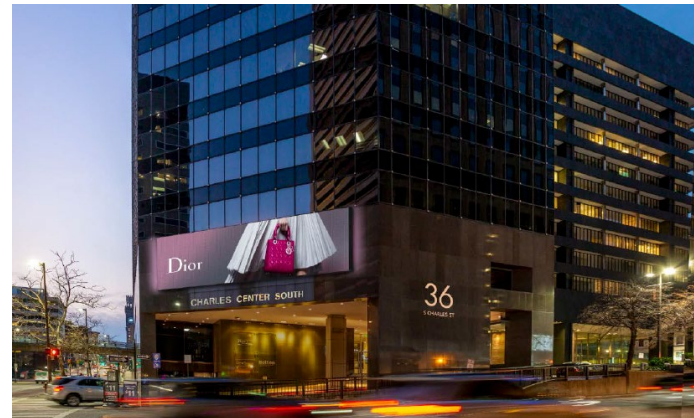
## Visual Clutter

Staff has created the following definition of visual clutter;

*Visual clutter is defined as the presence of or abundance of signs, poles, mechanical equipment, and other accessory items that are of multiple sizes, types, and colors that are inappropriate for or conflict with the character of the immediate context, which includes, but is not limited to architecture/building design, street typology and surrounding uses. What might constitute visual clutter in one context may be appropriate in another.*

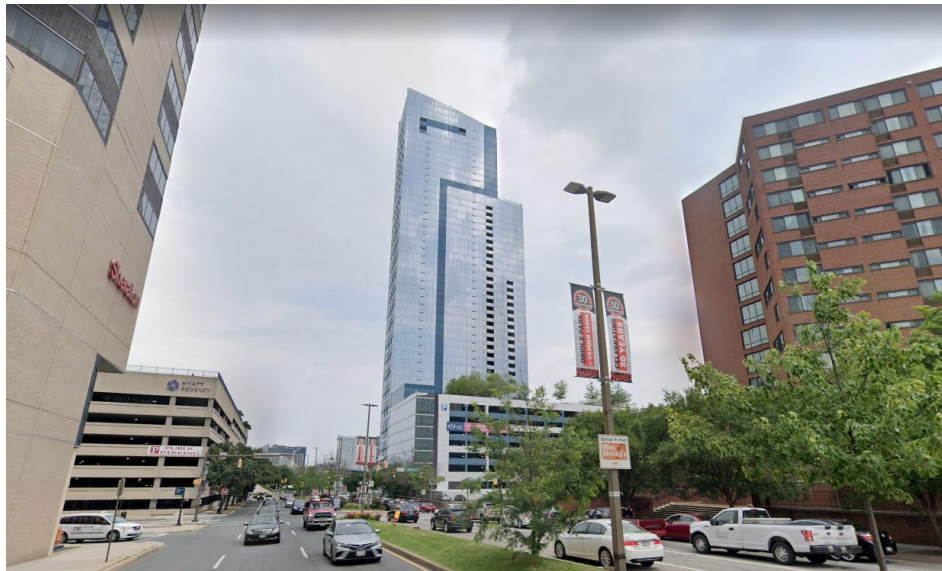


# Clarify “compatibility with architectural design”





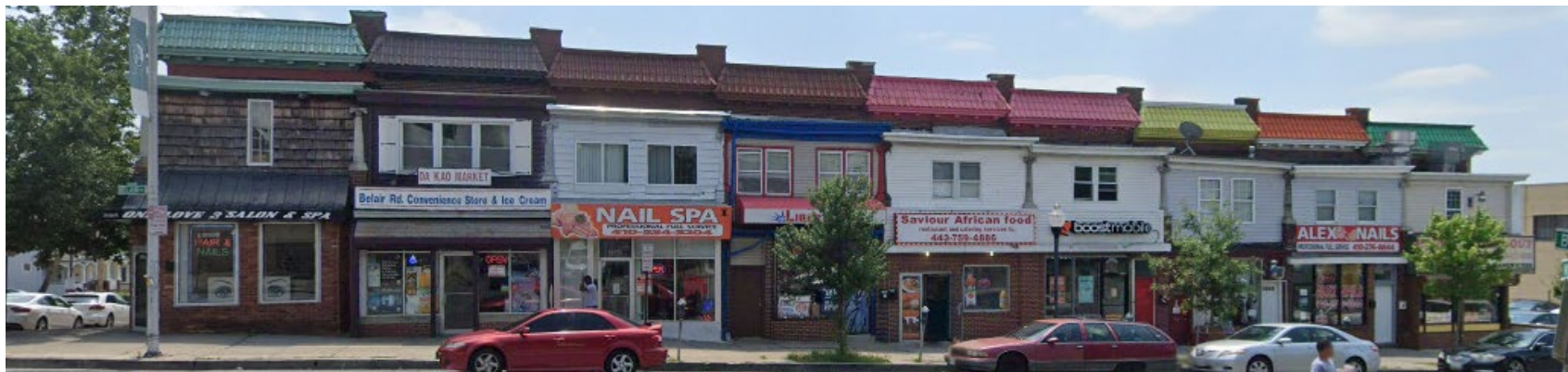
# Guidelines limiting impact to residential properties (~10 min)



# Protection of view corridors (~10 min)



# Additional Comments



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