

# CITY COUNCIL BILL #18-0272/ ZONING- SIGN REGULATIONS

## PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING #2

October 1, 2018



# Meeting Purpose

To discuss what we've heard  
so far and to gather more  
comments



# CITY COUNCIL BILL #18-0272/ ZONING- SIGN REGULATIONS

## Title 17 Subtitles and Tables in Existing Code

Subtitle 1: Purpose of Title; Definitions

Subtitle 2: Placement, Design, and Construction

Subtitle 3: Sign Dimension Measurement Methodology

Subtitle 4: Sign Permit and Special Designations

Subtitle 5: Exempt Signs

Subtitle 6: Prohibited Signs

Subtitle 7: Temporary Signs

Subtitle 8: Permanent Signs

Subtitle 9: Areas of Special Sign Control

Subtitle 10: Nonconforming Signs

Table 17-804: Freestanding Sign Regulations

Table 17-812: Projecting Sign Regulations

## Title 17 Subtitles and Tables in Proposed Code

Subtitle 1: Purpose of Title; Definitions

Subtitle 2: Placement, Design and Construction

Subtitle 3: Sign Dimension Measurement Methodology

Subtitle 4: Requirements By Sign Type

Subtitle 5: Areas of Special Signage Control

Table 17-201: Sign Regulations

Table 17-306: Maximum Cumulative Area of Signs



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## Sign Types in the Existing Code

<p><b>Sign Permit and Special Designations</b> (Subtitle 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classic Signs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prohibited Signs</b> (Subtitle 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcoholic Beverage and Cigarette Advertising</li> <li>• Billboards</li> <li>• Moving or Flashing</li> <li>• Obscene</li> <li>• Painted</li> <li>• Portable</li> </ul>	<p><b>Permanent Signs</b> (Subtitle 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awnings and Canopies</li> <li>• Electronic message Signs</li> <li>• Freestanding Signs</li> <li>• Marquees</li> <li>• Menu Board Signs</li> <li>• Nameplates</li> <li>• Neighborhood Identification signs</li> <li>• Open-Space Directional Signs</li> <li>• Open-Space Identification Signs</li> <li>• Parking Access Signs</li> <li>• Projecting Signs</li> <li>• Residential Identification Signs</li> <li>• Roof Signs</li> <li>• Wall Signs</li> <li>• Window Signs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exempt Signs</b> (Subtitle 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banners (Temporary)</li> <li>• Bike Sharing Stations, advertising on</li> <li>• Flags</li> <li>• Garage or Yard Sale</li> <li>• Governmental</li> <li>• House Number</li> <li>• Memorial Plaques</li> <li>• Misc Informational Matter</li> <li>• Official Public Notices</li> <li>• Parking Regulation Signs</li> <li>• Non-commercial or political signs</li> <li>• Real Estate Signs</li> <li>• Warning Signs</li> <li>• Window Signs (Temporary)</li> <li>• “Sponsor-a-road” signs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Temporary Signs</b> (Subtitle 7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A-Frame</li> <li>• Attention-getting devices</li> <li>• Temporary Construction Signs</li> <li>• Temporary, subdivision or PUD signs</li> <li>• Temporary Pole Signs</li> <li>• Temporary Wall Signs</li> </ul>	

## Sign Types in the Proposed Code

Requirements By Sign Type (Subtitle 4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A-Frame</li> <li>• Alcoholic Beverage and Cigarette Advertising Signs (generally prohibited)</li> <li>• Awning or Canopy Signs and Open-Structural Framework Signs</li> <li>• Banner Signs</li> <li>• Billboards</li> <li>• Electronic Signs</li> <li>• Freestanding Signs</li> <li>• Moving or Flashing Signs</li> <li>• Obscene Signs (generally prohibited)</li> <li>• Portable Signs (generally prohibited)</li> <li>• Projecting Signs</li> <li>• Roof Signs</li> <li>• Wall Signs</li> <li>• Window Signs</li> </ul> <p>• Provisional Fence Signs are allowed, but no Subtitle 4 standards.</p>



## The Big Changes

- Far Fewer Sign Types
- Allowable signs will not only be linked to zoning district, but uses within a zoning district per the use table.
- Sign regulations are tailored by sign type for each zoning district.
- Electronic Signs will range from less than 15 sq. ft. to approximately 18,000 sq. ft (with ASSC).
- Areas of Special Signage Control Clarified
  - Amount of signage for Areas of Special Signage Control (ASSC) will be governed by sign type and total per lot.
  - Billboards will be allowed in ASSCs.
  - ASSCs will allow for % and quantity deviations of signs.
  - Findings Of Fact and Standards Clarified



## **General Positive Feedback**

- **Like the incorporation of a more comprehensive table.**
- **Like more generous amount of signs for commercial areas and mixed-use buildings.**
- **Like the protections and limits of signage in residential areas.**
- **Like the ease of ability to enforce. Something either is or isn't.**
- **Like the expansion of electronic signs to allow for more types and sizes.**
- **Like the inclusion of limited capability to do billboards (general advertising).**



## **General Points of Concern**

- **Exclusion of signs that were temporary or exempt yet regulated. (banners, political signs, attention getting devices, etc.)**
- **Given 1<sup>st</sup> amendment rights are there still limits on obscene signs or alcoholic beverage signs.**
- **Illumination standards, especially with the ability to do more and bigger electronic signs.**
- **Allowing billboards will allow some neighborhoods to be overrun with general advertising.**



## **Specific Areas of Greatest Concern**

- **Attention-Getting Devices**
- **Banner Signs**
- **Billboards**
- **Electronic Signs**
- **Projecting Signs**
- **Wall Signs**
- **Window Signs**





## Attention-Getting Devices

- In the current code these are defined temporary signs and regulated. Only allowed in C-3, C-4 and PC Districts.
- CCB- removes definition and does not regulate them.
- Suggested proposal is to re-insert definition and prohibit them.
- Possibility is to reinsert the existing standards with more specific prohibitions to the residential zoning categories, but it is hard to regulate attention-getting devices.



## Banner Signs

- Concerns on both sides of the table- some do not agree they should be allowed as permanent signs, others don't feel the proposed legislation allows for enough of them or large enough.
- Current code allows them as both temporary and permanent signs. Very unclear and possibly the most abused signs.
- Proposed legislation allows for 3 types in order to customize the types, size and districts for banner signs.



## Banner Signs

- Early thoughts on solutions
  - If we reinsert attention-getting devices, make clear that banner signs are not attention-getting devices.
  - Would keep the 3 types banner signs, but change Pole-mounted banner signs to say freestanding banner signs.
  - We cannot add temporary signs back in at this juncture.



## Billboards- What the bill proposes

- General prohibition is still intact except in ASSCs.
- Existing billboards may be converted to a digital billboard provided documentation of removal of 3 non-digital billboards.
- An existing billboard may not be converted to digital if:
  - It is attached to a building that is 35 feet or less in height.
  - It is a pole mounted billboard that is 35 feet or less in height.
  - It is located in or within 250 feet of a residential district.
- New static billboards are only allowed in C-1, C-1-E, or C-1-VC zoning districts.
- New digital billboards are allowed in C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, TOD-4, or PC zoning districts.



## Billboards -Questions Received

- Will the loosening of the Billboard prohibition in the city allow for billboards all over the city? No, they are only allowed in areas of special signage control.
- Should billboards within the areas of special signage control have to conform to the three the one conversion for digital billboards? No, some areas of special signage control will not have existing billboards or belong to an entity that could remove them.
- Billboards appear on the signage table should they have their own dimension requirements? No, that is not the intent of them in the table their appearance is to let you know that they are allowed but they are a type of electronic sign. We can clarify this intent.



## Electronic Signs- What the bill proposes

- Merges several definitions from the existing code.
- Creation of five electronic sign categories.
- Sign definition has expanded to include not just digital messaging but digital art, electronic graphics, videos, projection and wall integrated technology.
- Dwell time allows for minimum 10 second dwell for digital graphics and one minute maximum dwell time for digital animation in videos.



## Electronic Signs

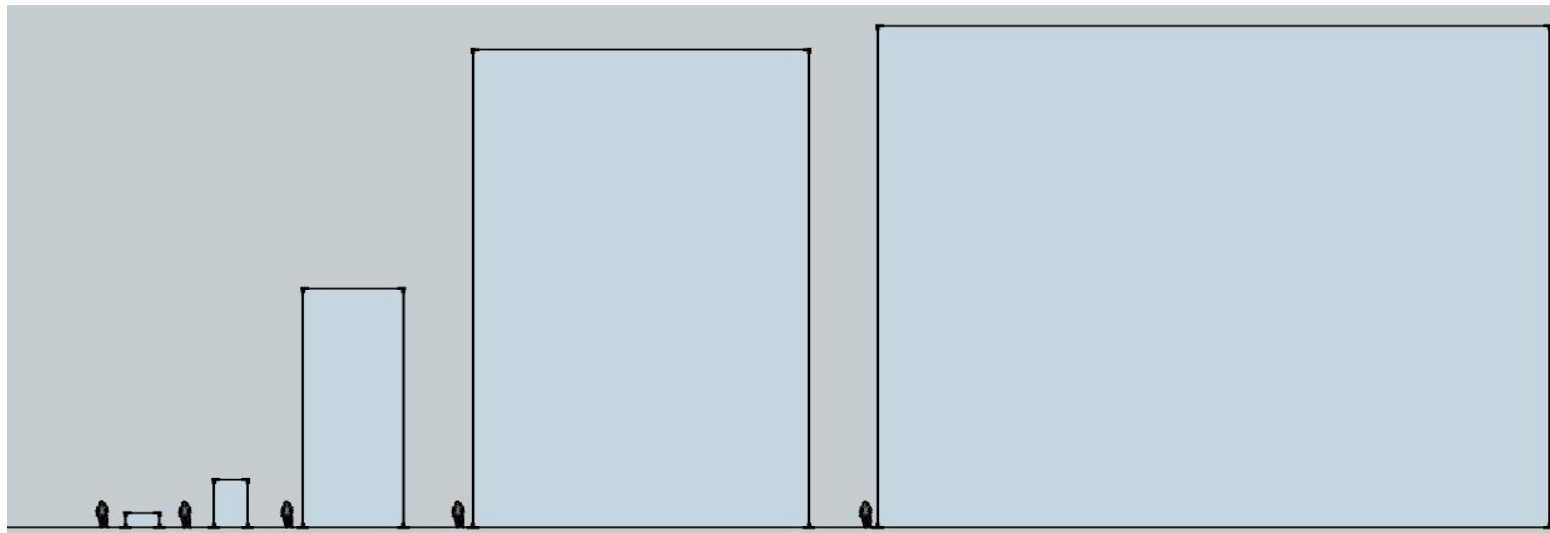
- Standalone electronic signs must follow the rules outlined in the electronic sign standards.
- An electronic sign may be integrated with another sign type outlined in the electronic sign standards.
  - Must follow the rules of the non-electronic sign type.
  - The electronic sign component may only be 25% of the non-electronic sign type.



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## 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



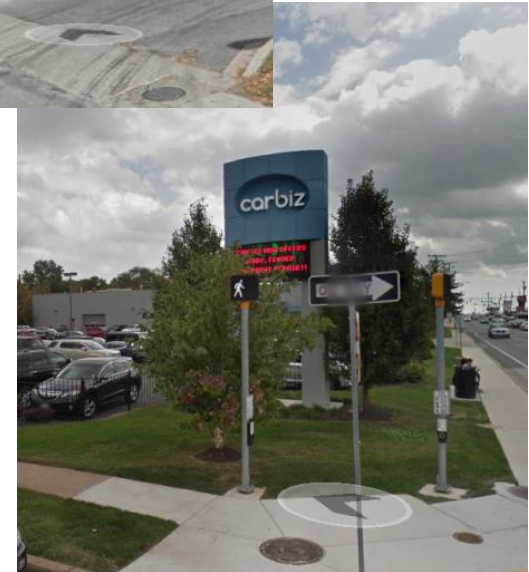


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## Electronic Signs Examples



**Standalone**



***Incorporating  
into other sign  
types***



## Electronic Signs

- A dwell time of one minute for video is quite long and could be dangerous to motorists. Have you considered changing this or putting in other standards such as placement standards of where you can do digital video( certain street typologies, above a certain height, etc.)?  
We have not, but are looking into that.
- **Are electronic signs the same as billboards?** No, but technology is such that electronic signs can easily change to billboards which is why the Billboard language is presumed to come in the form of digital billboards.



## Electronic Signs

**Why do electronic sign categories III, IV and V have base regulations for size, sign type and quantity?**

- It is necessary in order to establish a base from which the deviations can come in the ASSCs.
- An area of special signage control will determine the quantity but they must fit within a deviation amount. Planning commission does not have the ability to do variances and therefore limits must be set as if it were a conditional use.



## Electronic Signs

Why do electronic sign categories III, IV and V have base regulations for size, sign type and quantity?

- Also these categories must have limits in order to distinguish themselves as categories.
- This allows us to customize where which types of electronic signs go in the city. All zoning districts cannot have the largest amount of electronic signs nor deviate from an unlimited size.
- Allowable sign types are related to the categories of electronic signs. An electronic sign may be integrated with another sign type outlined in the electronic sign standards.



## Projecting Signs

- **Can projecting signs be added to multifamily buildings and R-8 through R-10 zoning districts?** Yes, we will accommodate this. We will reformulate the table to group R-8 with R-9 and R-10 zoning districts.
- **Why does it seem that projecting banner signs can be larger than regular projecting signs?** This is not the case regular projecting signs space are delineated for ground-floor and above the ground floor and in some cases the measurement calculation is different in the quantity is different.



## Wall Signs

- **Wall Signs and Projecting Signs Can no longer be cloth or flexible material. Now Banner Signs. What if the flexible material is akin to something durable and permanent – more lasting?** This is a huge distinguishing feature that allows us to create banner signs as something different in definition from other wall and projecting signs.
- **Why must wall signs be placed on the sign frieze or below the second floor window sill?** The standard can probably be rewritten to loosen for many zoning districts, but this is a huge concern in MainStreet areas.



## Wall Signs

- **Why is it that wall signs cannot be made of a flexible material?** This inherently becomes a banner sign per our definition. We understand changes in technology but must have a line in order to separate the definitions.
- **Why does it seem that wall-mounted banner signs can be larger than regular projecting signs?** This is not the case regular wall signs space are delineated for ground-floor and above the ground floor and in some cases the measurement calculation is different in the quantity is different.
- Will look at increasing the maximum area allowed for ground floor tenant signage.
- Painted signs are a type of wall sign.





## Window Signs

- Overall prohibition on covering any part of a window door or prominent architectural feature unless allowed by Title 17.
- **Why is there a 25% coverage? This seems very onerous** The 25% coverage is a carryover we did not change. We do understand that there could be a loosening of this, we can consider removing the 25% coverage as a base requirement and allowing customization of coverage within the signage table.
- **Why is there a limit to first and second story?** The first and second story provision is in response to concerns from all windows being covered on buildings.
- The two provisions together prevent the entirety of ground floor windows being covered. (This concerns is huge regarding liquor and other product sales advertisements and “displays”).





## Window Signs

- We have received questions about allowing video projection window signs that cover the entirety of the window. We will look at this in conjunction with electronic signs. This was not considered in the drafting of the bill.



## Additional Items

- Looking in to adding provisions in for splitting the wall sign allotment for integrated signage, pad site buildings and properties that have multiple properties on a lot, such as shopping centers.
- This would be in addition to the ground floor “tenant” signage.



## **Tentative Timeline**

- **August 29<sup>th</sup>- Public Informational Meeting**
- **September 6<sup>th</sup>- Planning Commission (Presentation and Testimony only)**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Week of October- 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting**
- **October 18<sup>th</sup>- Planning Commission (vote)**



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## Communication and Comments

- Please email written comments to [tamara.woods@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:tamara.woods@baltimorecity.gov)
- Staff set up Signage Rewrite Webpage at <https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/> (PowerPoint Presentations, Staff Reports and links to legislation and LiveStream)
- Formal Letter of Support/Opposition to be included for the record can be mailed or emailed, but addressed to:

Laurie Feinberg, Acting Director of Planning or  
Sean Davis, Chairman of Planning Commission  
City of Baltimore Department of Planning  
417 E. Fayette Street- 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202

