

Chapter 60 SIGN CODE

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Article 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

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17.60.1.010 Title.

This chapter is known as the Great Falls Sign Code, may be cited as such and is referred to in this chapter as "this Code."

17.60.1.020 Intent and purpose.

The intent of this Code is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Great Falls; to provide for a well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing appearance of the community; and to provide adequate business identification and advertising communication. The purpose of this Code is to establish parameters for size, location, type, maintenance and construction of signs and sign structures within the City of Great Falls in order to:

- A. Promote a positive economic and business climate through distinctive and effective signage.
- B. Improve Great Falls' community image by eliminating sign clutter.
- C. Encourage signage of a scale and character consistent with building, site, streetscape and neighborhood.

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- D. Ensure protection of pedestrians and motorists from injury and/or damages attributable to distractions and obstructions caused by improperly placed signs.
- E. Provide a comprehensive and cohesive code that is readily understood and consistently applied.
- F. Provide effective and binding code implementation and enforcement measures.

Article 2 PROHIBITED SIGNS AND SIGNS EXEMPT FROM PERMIT

Sections:

[17.60.2.010 Prohibited signs and exceptions.](#)

[17.60.2.020 Signs exempt from permit.](#)

17.60.2.010 Prohibited signs and exceptions.

The following signs are prohibited within the City of Great Falls:

- A. Signs located on public property, except light pole banners for community events and authorized Central Avenue banners. Sandwich boards are allowed on public **sidewalks wider than 8 feet wide and adjacent to the business being advertized, adjoining properties with a commercial land use** ~~property in the Central Business Core District only.~~ **and approved bench signs and transit shelters permitted through Chapter 12.4.040.**
- B. Portable changeable-copy signs.
- C. Signs that flash, spin, rotate or have similar motion-based devices. This includes signs with moving parts, flashing lights of any kind and/or sound, but does not prohibit permanent electronic message boards or permanent electronic changeable copy signs as long as they do not flash. The display on electronic message boards must be synchronized so that any flashing **or alternating** text must remain for a minimum of three (3) seconds.
- D. Light beams, holograms and rotating beacons or signs that simulate traffic signals or emergency response equipment or cause a traffic distraction.
- E. Roof signs which extend more than half way up the roof to the ridge line. (See Exhibit 60-1 of this chapter.)
- F. Signs advertising a product, service or business that are carried, worn or otherwise supported by a person or animal except during licensed parades and community events. This does not apply to uniforms and corporate wear.
- G. Signs on City trees, utility poles, street lights, traffic control boxes or other public property. This does not apply to official government signs.
- H. Vehicles used as on-premise or off-premise signs. Vehicles and trailers existing for the primary purpose of advertising are prohibited. Such vehicle-signs are not permitted in public rights-of-way, on public property or on private property where such objects are visible from the public right-of-way. This restriction is intended to prohibit the use of vehicles for the singular purpose of on-premise or off-premise advertising. This restriction shall not be construed to prohibit normal advertising on commercial vehicles, e.g. firm name, telephone number, business address, major enterprise, principal products or services. This restriction shall not be construed to limit political signs mounted on vehicles. Commercial transportation vehicles that are licensed, self-propelled, in compliance with State and City statute and/or ordinance

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requirements and are operating in the function for which they are intended are not subject to this prohibition.

- I. **Lawn signs advertising a product, service or business.**
- J. **Lighted signs or electronic message display in residential zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-5, R-6, R-9 and R-10) except for existing premises with worship facilities and education facilities meeting the sign criteria requirements of 17.60.4.010.**

17.60.2.020 Signs exempt from permit.

The following signs do not require sign permits. However, signage must be in compliance with this Code in all other respects.

- A. Flags, emblems, crests or insignia of any nation, political subdivision, corporation or any other entity or business.
- B. Government and Public Utility Signs. This includes traffic regulatory, warning signs, information or directional signs, temporary special event signs, public notices and identification signs for public buildings and grounds that are erected, installed or placed by or on behalf of any federal, State, county or City government. Public utility signs showing locations of underground facilities or public telephones, and safety signs on construction sites, are included within this exemption.
- C. Real estate signs. (See Exhibit 60-2 of this chapter.) Each premise that is for sale, lease or rent is allowed two (2) real estate signs no larger than six (6) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height in residential zoning districts or thirty-two (32) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height in commercial and industrial districts. A separate open house sign may be displayed during open house hours only. **Signs must be placed a minimum of twelve (12) feet from the back of the curb.**
- D. Construction signs **placed during construction projects** displaying the names of general and sub-contractors, architects, designers, financial underwriters, etc. provided that such signs do not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height in residential zoning districts or thirty-two (32) square feet in area and ten (10) feet in height in **non residential commercial and industrial** districts. (See Exhibit 60-2 of this chapter.) Larger on-premise signs promoting a new development would be allowed by permit as a temporary sign. **Signs must be placed a minimum of twelve (12) feet from the back of the curb.**
- E. Ideological signs ~~no larger than six (6) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height~~ **larger than sixteen (16) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height. Signs must be placed a minimum of twelve (12) feet from the back of the curb.**
- F. ~~Ground~~ **On-premise ground** level window signs that are no larger than one-third (1/3) of an architecturally distinct window. (See Exhibit 60-3 of this chapter.) Signs in windows above ground level are allowed for business identification purposes only and must not exceed one-fourth (1/4) of the area of a given window.
- G. On-premise directional or incidental signs not exceeding four (4) square feet in area that are not designed to be legible from an off-premise position. **Signs may not be placed within the clear vision triangle.** (See Exhibit 60-2 of this chapter **and 17.32.160 Intersection visibility.**)
- H. ~~Political~~ **Election related political** signs no larger than sixteen (16) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height. Signs may be placed no earlier than 60 days prior to any election. Signs must be removed within seven (7) consecutive days after an election. When a primary election is held in September, successful candidates may leave signs up through the **November** general election. Political signs must be placed at least twelve (12) feet from the back of the curb. (See Exhibit 60-3 of this chapter.) Vehicular and pedestrian sight distances must be unobstructed.

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- I. Non-illuminated temporary signs (**banners and pole flags**) for civic, charitable, educational, religious events/celebrations or special non-profit community events/celebrations are allowed without permit but placement must comply with provisions of this Code. ~~(See Exhibit 60-4 of this chapter.)~~ **Temporary signs must be placed a minimum of twelve (12) feet from the back of the curb.** One (1) off-premise special event sign is allowed per premise. The sign is limited to thirty-six (36) square feet. The sign display is limited to ten (10) days before the event and must be removed within seventy-two (72) hours of the close of the event.
- J. Special community event light-pole banners are allowed in the public right-of-way **which maintain the eight (8) feet clearance, from grade to bottom of banner.** (See Exhibit 60-5 of this chapter.)
- K. Signs for approved home occupations, family day cares, adult group homes and other approved non-residential uses allowed in residential homes are allowed without permit, but shall conform to the following standards:
 - 1. No exterior display shall be permitted except allowed signage.
 - 2. Allowed signage is limited to one (1) non-illuminated sign. Such signage shall:
 - a. Not exceed one hundred forty-four (144) square inches (one (1) square foot) in area;
 - b. Not exceed twenty-four (24) inches in length; and,
 - c. Be placed flat against the dwelling unit.
- L. Street number signs not exceeding four (4) square feet
- M. Garage Sale signs not exceeding four (4) square feet displayed on the day of the sale only. Signs placed on public property as well as signs not removed at the end of the sale will be subject to citation.

Article 3 TEMPORARY SIGNS

Sections:

[17.60.3.010 On-premise temporary signs.](#)

[17.60.3.020 Central Avenue banners.](#)

17.60.3.010 On-premise temporary signs.

Each commercial or industrial premise may receive a permit for one (1) temporary sign of up to sixty-four (64) square feet. Banners, wind signs and sandwich board signs are considered temporary. The permit may be granted for up to sixty (60) days. An annual permit may be issued for one (1) temporary sign per premise for a period of one (1) year, upon payment of a fee as may be set by City Commission resolution. The following restrictions apply:

- A. Temporary signs must be located **completely within the property lines of the premise and must be placed a minimum of twelve (12) feet from the back of the curb.** ~~totally on private property and no closer to the public right-of-way than one-half (1/2) the distance between the right-of-way and the closest building. (See Exhibit 60-4 of this chapter.)~~
- B. Temporary signs must be well-maintained and secured. Signs may not be tattered or torn.

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- C. Temporary signs may not be displayed in place of permanent signage. Businesses must display permanent signage no later than forty-five (45) days after commencement of commercial operations or show proof that signage is on order.
- D. Temporary signs must be of professional quality.
- E. Large inflatables are considered temporary signs. Permits must be obtained before they are displayed. Inflatables may not be higher than twenty-five (25) feet above the ground as measured from the top of the inflatable.
- F. **Sandwich board signs. Temporary sandwich board signs may be placed on public property within properties with commercial land uses. Such signs must be placed a minimum of twelve (12) feet from the back of the curb except in districts with sidewalks in excess of eight (8) feet in width. Sandwich board sign must be placed so that the middle third of the sidewalk is clear. A minimum of five (5) feet of sidewalk width must be unobstructed. (See Exhibit 60-12 of this chapter.)**
 - 1. **Sandwich board signs are limited to one (1) sign per business frontage and must conform to the following design standards:**
 - a. **Each sign may have a maximum of two (2) faces, not to exceed an aggregate total of twelve (12) square feet per sign. (See Exhibit 60-12 of this chapter.)**
 - b. **Each sign must be secured in place by no less than two (2) weights of not less than ten (10) pounds each, placed upon the base material.**
 - c. **The permit fee for each sandwich board sign shall be established by City Commission resolution.**
 - 2. **Sandwich board signs must be placed adjacent to or upon the permit-holding premises, may only be displayed during business hours of the advertised business and must be removed during all other times.**
 - 3. **Sandwich board signs may not be illuminated or energized.**
 - 4. **The sign permit may be revoked at any time for lack of adequate maintenance or safety in accordance with 17.60.7.090. The sandwich board sign will be removed by the sign owner upon notice of permit revocation. If not removed, the City may remove the sign. The sign owner may reclaim the sign within ten (10) working days of the removal. After such time, the sign may be destroyed.**

17.60.3.020 Central Avenue banners/BNSF Underpasses (1st Avenue North 6th Street Southwest).

This section applies only to off-premise banners displayed across Central Avenue **and BNSF Underpasses at 1st Avenue North and 6th Street Southwest.**

- A. Banners may be no larger than one hundred (100) square feet.
- B. One (1) banner permit may be issued at a time for a maximum of thirty (30) consecutive days. Time allowances are exclusive, i.e. only one (1) sign may be displayed at a time. The entire time allowance for a given banner permit must expire before another banner may be displayed.
- C. Permission to connect a banner must be received from the owners of the banner-anchoring buildings.

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Exhibit 60-6

ON-PREMISE SIGNAGE TABLE					
	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL M-1, C-1, C-5, PLI, POS	COMMERCIAL/ INDUSTRIAL C-2, C-3, I-1, I-2, AI (non-Riverfront)	CENTRAL BUSINESS CORE DISTRICT C-4	RIVERFRONT CORRIDOR M-2	PREMISES EXCEEDING 50,000 S.F. IN AREA
TOTAL ALLOWANCE PER PREMISE (S.F.)	50	Wall signage allowance plus 200	Wall signage allowance plus 100	Wall signage allowance plus 100	Wall signage allowance plus 300
WALL Signs per Frontage Area	1 (max 2 signs) 32 S.F. per sign	10% of building wall area per frontage	10% of building wall area per frontage	10% of building wall area per frontage	10% of building wall area per frontage
FREE-STANDING POLE Signs per Frontage Area (S.F.) Height (FT)	1 32/sign 6	1 1 S.F./linear foot of premise frontage Max. 200 25	1 1 S.F./linear foot of premise frontage Max. 100 20	1 1 S.F./linear foot of premise frontage Max. 100 20	1 1 per premise frontage Max. 300 25
PROJECTING Signs in Place of Wall or Free- standing Sign Maximum Area (S.F.)	32	32	32	32	32

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

Article 4 ON-PREMISE SIGNS

Sections:

[17.60.4.010 Residential, ~~neighborhood commercial and central business periphery~~ districts.](#)

[17.60.4.015 Neighborhood commercial, Central business periphery and Mixed use districts.](#)

[17.60.4.020 Commercial and industrial districts.](#)

[17.60.4.030 Central business core district.](#)

[17.60.4.040 Riverfront corridor.](#)

[17.60.4.050 Premises exceeding 50,000 square feet.](#)

[17.60.4.060 Montana ExpoPark, Multi Sports Park, Legion Ball Park, Don Olsen Field, American Fields, Riverview Little League, Centene Stadium and the Siebel Soccer Park](#)

17.60.4.010 Residential, ~~neighborhood commercial and central business periphery~~ districts.

The following on-premise signs are authorized for approved commercial uses in residential zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-5, R-6, R-9 and R-10), ~~neighborhood commercial zoning districts (C-1), central business periphery zoning districts (C-5), mixed use zoning districts (M-1), public lands and institutional zoning districts (PLI) and parks and open space zoning districts (POS),~~ subject to issuance of a sign permit. Home occupations, family day cares and the like, allowed in residential units are addressed in Section 17.60.2.020.K of this Title and are not included in this section. Each ~~commercial~~ premise is limited to a maximum of fifty (50) square feet of total signage. If the premise houses multiple tenants, the owner is responsible for allocating signage amongst the separate tenants/businesses.

- A. Wall signs. (See Exhibit 60-7 and Exhibit 60-1 of this chapter.)
 1. One (1) wall sign per premise frontage. No more than two (2) wall signs per premise.
 2. Maximum area per sign: thirty-two (32) square feet.
 3. Maximum projection - excluding awnings: twenty-four (24) inches.
 4. Wall signs may be placed no higher than six (6) inches below the top of the wall or parapet.
 5. Wall signs may not obstruct required windows and/or required exits.
- B. Freestanding signs including pole signs, monument signs and low-profile signs. (See Exhibit 60-8 of this chapter.)

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1. One (1) freestanding sign per premise frontage is allowed as long as there is a perimeter separation of two hundred fifty (250) feet between any two (2) signs. No more than two (2) signs per premise are allowed.
 2. Maximum area per sign: thirty-two (32) square feet.
 3. Height limit is six (6) feet above finished grade.
 4. Freestanding signs must be located entirely on private property.
 5. When a free standing sign structure is installed, the base of the sign must be landscaped. If the freestanding sign is located within a vehicular use area, the landscaped area must be designed to protect sign base supports from vehicular incursion. Support protection examples include bollards, stones or curbing. Such protection must be integrated with the landscaping. Landscaping may contain trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennial or annual flowers, turf and organic or inorganic mulches. Living plant materials must cover at least seventy-five (75) percent of the landscaped area.
 6. If a premise is subsequently subdivided after a freestanding sign allocation has been established for the premise, the subsequently created parcels shall share the freestanding sign allocation; shall share the same freestanding sign pole or monument; and, the owner/subdivider is responsible for allocating the freestanding signage amongst the separately created parcels at the time of each sale or lease.
- C. Projecting signs. Each business with frontage on a public right-of-way is allowed one (1) projecting sign along the public right-of-way. (See Exhibit 60-5 and Exhibit 60-9 of this chapter.)
1. A projecting sign may be used instead of, but not in addition to, a freestanding sign.
 2. Projecting signs and wall signs advertising the same business may not occupy the same building frontage.
 3. Projecting signs are limited to sixteen (16) square feet plus one (1) additional square foot for each three (3) feet of linear building footage in excess of fifty (50) feet. Maximum allowance: thirty-two (32) square feet.
 4. Projecting signs must not project over public property.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.4.015 Neighborhood commercial, Central business periphery, Mixed use, Public lands and institutional and Parks and open space districts.

The following on-premise signs are authorized for approved commercial uses in neighborhood commercial zoning district (C-1), central business periphery zoning district (C-5), mixed use zoning district (M-1), public lands and institutional zoning district (PLI) and parks and open space zoning district (POS), subject to issuance of a sign permit.

Maximum sign allocation for each commercial premise under this section equals the standard wall signage allocation plus two hundred (200) square feet maximum freestanding signage. If the premise houses multiple tenants, the owner is responsible for allocating signage amongst the separate tenants/businesses.

- A. Wall signs. (See Exhibit 60-7 Exhibit 60-1 and Exhibit 60-10 of this chapter.)
1. A maximum of ten (10) percent of each frontage building wall, excluding service delivery areas and parapets, may be covered with wall signage.
 2. Maximum projection - excluding awnings: twenty-four (24) inches.

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3. **Wall signs may be placed no higher than six (6) inches below the top of the wall or parapet.**
 4. **Wall signs may not obstruct required windows and/or required exits.**
- B. Freestanding signs including pole signs, monument signs and low-profile signs. (See Exhibit 60-8 and Exhibit 60-11 of this chapter.)**
1. **One (1) freestanding sign per premise street frontage.**
 2. **A maximum area of one (1) square foot per linear foot of premise frontage facing one (1) street or avenue is allowed. A maximum of two hundred (200) square feet of total freestanding signage per premise is allowed.**
 3. **Height limit is fifteen (15) feet above finished grade of the lot.**
 4. **Freestanding signs must be located entirely on private property.**
 5. **Signs may not project over public property.**
 6. **When a freestanding sign structure is installed, the base of the sign must be landscaped. If the freestanding sign is located within a vehicular use area, the landscaped area must be designed to protect sign base supports from vehicular incursion. Support protection examples include bollards, stones or curbing that are integrated with the landscaping. Landscaping may contain trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennial or annual flowers, turf and organic or inorganic mulches. Living plant materials must cover at least seventy-five (75) percent of the landscaped area.**
 7. **A twenty (20) percent increase in maximum freestanding sign area is granted when signage is entirely low-profile. (See Exhibit 60-5 of this chapter.)**
 8. **If a premise is subsequently subdivided after a freestanding sign allocation has been established for the premise, the subsequently created parcels shall share the freestanding sign allocation; shall share the same freestanding sign pole or monument; and, the owner/subdivider is responsible for allocating the freestanding signage amongst the separately created parcels at the time of each sale or lease.**

17.60.4.020 Commercial and industrial districts.

The following on-premise signs are authorized on property in commercial zoning districts (C-2 or C-3), or industrial zoning districts (I-1, I-2 or AI) subject to a sign permit. Property contained within the central business core zoning district (C-4) is regulated by Section 17.60.4.030 of this chapter. The Riverfront Corridor District is regulated by Section 17.60.4.040. Premises exceeding 50,000 square feet are regulated by Section 17.60.4.050.

Maximum sign allocation for each commercial and/or industrial premise under this section equals the standard wall signage allocation plus two hundred (200) square feet maximum freestanding signage. If the premise houses multiple tenants, the owner is responsible for allocating signage amongst the separate tenants/businesses.

- A. Wall signs. (See Exhibit 60-7 Exhibit 60-1 and Exhibit 60-10 of this chapter.)**
1. **A maximum of ten (10) percent of each frontage building wall, excluding service delivery areas and parapets, may be covered with wall signage.**
 2. **Each premise is allowed a minimum of twenty-four (24) square feet of wall signage.**
 3. **Maximum projection - excluding awnings: twenty-four (24) inches.**
 4. **Wall signs may be placed no higher than six (6) inches below the top of the wall or parapet.**
 5. **Wall signs may not obstruct required windows and/or required exits.**

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- B. Freestanding signs including pole signs, monument signs and low-profile signs. (See Exhibit 60-8 and Exhibit 60-11 of this chapter.)
- ~~1. One (1) freestanding sign per premise street frontage.~~ A perimeter separation of two hundred fifty (250) feet is required between any two (2) freestanding signs on the premise. ~~No more than two (2) signs are allowed per premise.~~
 2. A maximum area of one (1) square foot per linear foot of premise frontage facing one (1) street or avenue is allowed. A maximum of two hundred (200) square feet of total freestanding signage per premise is allowed.
 3. Height limit is twenty-five (25) feet above finished grade of the lot **or twenty-five (25) feet above the centerline of the public right-of-way, measured at right angle of the roadway within one hundred (100) feet of the sign.**
 4. Freestanding signs must be located entirely on private property.
 5. Signs may not project over public property.
 6. When a freestanding sign structure is installed, the base of the sign must be landscaped. If the freestanding sign is located within a vehicular use area, the landscaped area must be designed to protect sign base supports from vehicular incursion. **Minimum six (6) feet curbed island or protective barrier.** Support protection examples include bollards, stones or curbing that are integrated with the landscaping. Landscaping may contain trees, shrubs, groundcovers, ~~perennial or annual~~ flowers, turf and organic or inorganic mulches. Living plant materials must cover at least seventy-five (75) percent of the landscaped area.
 7. A twenty (20) percent increase in the maximum freestanding sign area **available to a premise** is granted when signage is entirely low-profile. (See Exhibit 60-5 of this chapter.)
 8. If a premise is subsequently subdivided after a freestanding sign allocation has been established for the premise, the subsequently created parcels shall share the freestanding sign allocation; shall share the same freestanding sign pole or monument; and, the owner/subdivider is responsible for allocating the freestanding signage amongst the separately created parcels at the time of each sale or lease.
- C. ~~Projecting signs. Each business with frontage on a public right-of-way is allowed one (1) projecting sign along the public right-of-way. A sign permit is required. (See Exhibit 60-5 and Exhibit 60-9 of this chapter.)~~
- ~~1. A projecting sign may be used instead of, but not in addition to, a freestanding sign.~~
 - ~~2. Projecting signs and wall signs advertising the same business may not occupy the same building frontage.~~
 - ~~3. A projecting sign is limited to sixteen (16) square feet plus one (1) additional square foot for each three (3) feet of linear building footage in excess of fifty (50) feet to a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet.~~
 - ~~4. Projecting signs must not project over public property.~~

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.4.030 Central business core district.

The following on-premise signs are authorized on property within the central business core zoning district (C-4). A sign permit is required.

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A maximum of two (2) square feet of total signage for each linear foot of building frontage is permitted per premise to a maximum of two hundred (200) square feet. If the premise houses multiple tenants, the owner is responsible for allocating signage amongst the separate tenants/businesses. The following types of signs are allowed:

- A. Wall signs. (See Exhibit 60-7 and Exhibit 60-1 of this chapter.)
 1. A maximum of ten (10) percent of frontage building wall, excluding service delivery areas and parapets, may be covered with wall signage.
 2. Each premise is allowed at least twenty-four (24) square feet of wall signage.
 3. No single wall sign may exceed one hundred (100) square feet.
 4. Maximum projection - excluding awnings: twenty-four (24) inches.
 5. Wall signs may be placed no higher than six (6) inches below the top of the wall or parapet.
 6. Minimum vertical clearance allowances.
 7. Alley: fourteen (14) feet.
 - a. Other public property: eight (8) feet.
 - b. Wall signs may not obstruct required windows and/or required exits.
- B. Freestanding signs including monument signs and other low-profile signs. (See Exhibit 60-8 of this chapter.)
 1. One (1) freestanding sign per premise street frontage. ~~A perimeter separation of two hundred fifty (250) feet is required between any two (2) freestanding signs. No more than two (2) signs per premise will be permitted.~~
 2. Area may not exceed one hundred (100) square feet.
 3. Height limit is twenty (20) feet from finished grade of the lot.
 4. Freestanding signs must be located entirely on private property and must not overhang public property.
 5. A 20% increase in maximum freestanding sign area is granted when signage on the premise is entirely low-profile.
 6. When a freestanding sign structure is installed, the base of the sign must be landscaped. If the freestanding sign is located within a vehicular use area, the landscaped area must be designed to protect sign base supports from vehicular incursion. Support protection examples include bollards, stones or curbing that are integrated with the landscaping. Landscaping may contain trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennial or annual flowers, turf and organic or inorganic mulches. Living plant materials must cover at least seventy-five (75) percent of the landscaped area.
 7. If a premise is subsequently subdivided after a freestanding sign allocation has been established for the premise, the subsequently created parcels shall share the freestanding sign allocation; shall share the same freestanding sign pole or monument; and, the owner/subdivider is responsible for allocating the freestanding signage amongst the separately created parcels at the time of each sale or lease.
- C. Projecting signs. Businesses with frontage on a public right-of-way are allowed one (1) projecting sign along the public right-of-way. (See Exhibit 60-9 and Exhibit 60-12 of this chapter.)
 1. Projecting signs may be used instead of, but not in addition to, a freestanding signs.

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2. Projecting signs and wall signs advertising the same business may not occupy the same building frontage.
 3. A projecting sign is limited to sixteen (16) square feet plus one (1) additional square foot for each three (3) feet of linear building footage in excess of fifty (50) feet to a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet.
 4. Projecting signs may extend no farther than six (6) feet over public property or more than two-thirds (2/3) the distance to the back of curb, whichever is less.
 5. Signs may project no farther than one (1) foot into an alley.
 6. Minimum vertical clearance allowances.
 - a. Alley: fourteen (14) feet.
 - b. Other public property: eight (8) feet.
- D. ~~Sandwich board signs. Temporary sandwich board signs may be placed on public property within the Central Business Core District only. This is the only district in which sandwich boards are allowed on public property. Such signs require an annual permit to occupy the public right-of-way.~~
- ~~1. Sandwich board signs are limited to one (1) sign per business frontage and must conform to the following design standards:
 - a. Each sign may have a maximum of two (2) faces, not to exceed an aggregate total of twelve (12) square feet per sign. (See Exhibit 60-12 of this chapter.)
 - b. Each sign must be secured in place by no less than two (2) weights of not less than ten (10) pounds each, placed upon the base material.
 - c. Sign permits are issued only to holders of insurance equal to that required for a sign contractor Class B license.
 - d. The permit fee for each sandwich board sign is established by City Commission resolution.
 - e. A sandwich board sign must be placed so that the middle third of the sidewalk is clear. A minimum of five (5) feet of sidewalk width must be unobstructed. (See Exhibit 60-12 of this chapter.)~~
 - ~~2. Sandwich board signs must be placed adjacent to or upon the permit-holding premises, may only be displayed during business hours of the advertised business and must be removed from public property during all other times.~~
 - ~~3. Sandwich board signs may not be illuminated or energized.~~
 - ~~4. The sign permit may be revoked at any time for lack of adequate maintenance or safety. The sandwich board sign will be removed by the sign owner upon notice of permit revocation. If not removed, the City may remove the sign. The sign becomes City property. The sign owner may reclaim the sign within ten (10) working days of the removal. After such time, the sign may be destroyed.~~

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.4.040 Riverfront corridor and M-2 Districts.

The following on-premise signs are authorized on property zoned commercial or industrial within the Riverfront Corridor and all property zoned M-2. A sign permit is required. The Riverfront Corridor is the area on both banks of the Missouri River:

1. On the east and south sides of the river, the Corridor is the area bordering River Drive and Giant Springs Road, running from the southernmost limits of the City to the northernmost limits.
 2. On the west and north sides of the river, the Corridor includes the east side of Bay Drive and the east side of Third Street NW between Central Avenue West and the Northwest Bypass.
- A. Wall signs. (See Exhibit 60-7, Exhibit 60-1, and Exhibit 60-10 of this chapter.)
1. A maximum of ten (10) percent of each frontage building wall, excluding service delivery areas and parapets, may be covered with wall signage.
 2. Each premise is allowed at least twenty-four (24) square feet of wall signage.
 3. Maximum projection - excluding awnings: twenty-four (24) inches.
 4. Wall signs may be placed no higher than six (6) inches below the top of the wall or parapet.
 5. Wall signs may not obstruct required windows and/or required exits.
- B. Freestanding signs including monument signs and other low-profile signs. (See Exhibit 60-8 of this chapter.)
1. One (1) freestanding sign per premise street frontage. A perimeter separation of two hundred fifty (250) feet is required between any two (2) freestanding signs on the premise. No more than two (2) signs per premise.
 2. Total area for all freestanding signs on the premise a may not exceed one hundred (100) square feet.
 3. Height limit is twenty (20) feet from finished grade of the lot.
 4. Freestanding signs must be located entirely on private property.
 5. Freestanding signs may not project over public property.
 6. A 20% bonus for freestanding signs may be granted to premises that display signs no taller than eight (8) feet. (See Exhibit 60-5 of this chapter.)
 7. When a freestanding sign structure is installed, the base of the sign must be landscaped. If the freestanding sign is located within a vehicular use area, the landscaped area must be designed to protect sign base supports from the vehicular incursion. Support protection examples include bollards, stones or curbing that are integrated with the landscaping. Landscaping may contain trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennial or annual flowers, turf and organic or inorganic mulches. Living plant materials must cover at least seventy-five (75) percent of the landscaped area.
 8. If a premise is subsequently subdivided after a freestanding sign allocation has been established for the premise, the subsequently created parcels shall share the freestanding sign allocation; shall share the same freestanding sign pole or monument; and, the owner/subdivider is responsible for allocating the freestanding signage amongst the separately created parcels at the time of each sale or lease.
- C. ~~Projecting signs. Businesses with frontage on a public right-of-way are allowed one (1) projecting sign along the public right-of-way. (See Exhibit 60-5 and Exhibit 60-9 of this chapter.)~~

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- ~~1. A projecting sign may be used instead of, but not in addition to, a freestanding sign;~~
- ~~2. Projecting signs and wall signs advertising the same business may not occupy the same building frontage.~~
- ~~3. A projecting sign is limited to sixteen (16) square feet plus one (1) additional square foot for each three (3) feet of building linear footage in excess of fifty (50) feet to a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet.~~
- ~~4. Projecting signs must not project over public property.~~

17.60.4.050 Premises exceeding 50,000 square feet.

The following on-premise signs are authorized on premises zoned commercial, industrial, transitional or public lands and institutions that exceed fifty thousand (50,000) square feet. (See Exhibit 60-13 of this chapter.) ~~Montana ExpoPark, Multi- Sports Park, Legion Ball Park and the Soccer Park~~ **Don Olsen Field, American Fields, Riverview Little League, Centene Stadium and the Siebel Soccer Park** are covered under section 17.60.4.060.

The maximum sign allocation for each premise under this section equals the standard wall sign allocation plus three hundred (300) square feet maximum freestanding signage. If the premise houses multiple-tenants or is subsequently subdivided, a Comprehensive Signage Plan must be submitted to the Design Review Board. The owner of the premise is responsible for allocating signage amongst the separate tenants/businesses. (See Exhibit 60-13 of this chapter.)

- A. Wall signs. (See Exhibit 60-1 and Exhibit 60-7 of this chapter.)
 1. A maximum of ten (10) percent of frontage building wall, excluding service delivery areas and parapets, may be covered with wall signage.
 2. Each premise is allowed at least twenty-four (24) square feet of wall signage.
 3. Maximum projection - excluding awnings: twenty-four (24) inches.
 4. Wall signs may be placed no higher than six (6) inches below the top of the wall or parapet.
 5. Wall signs may not obstruct required windows and/or required exits.
- B. Freestanding signs including monument signs and other low profile signs. (See Exhibit 60-8 of this chapter.)
 1. A maximum of three hundred (300) square feet is allowed per premise.
 2. One (1) freestanding sign of no more than two hundred (200) square feet is allowed per street frontage. A perimeter separation of two hundred fifty (250) feet is required between any two (2) freestanding signs on any premise.
 3. Height limit is twenty-five (25) feet from the finished grade of the lot, except in the Central Business Core District, Riverfront Corridor, **Neighborhood commercial district**, or a residential area where height is limited to twenty (20) feet, twenty (20) feet, **fifteen (15) feet**, and six (6) feet, respectively.
 4. Freestanding signs must be located entirely on private property.
 5. Freestanding signs may not project over public property.
 6. A twenty (20) percent increase in maximum freestanding sign area is granted when all freestanding signage is entirely low-profile.
 7. When a freestanding sign structure is installed, the base of the sign must be landscaped. If the freestanding sign is located within a vehicular use area, the landscaped area must be

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designed to protect sign base supports from vehicular incursion. Support protection examples include bollards, stones or curbing that are integrated with the landscaping. Landscaping may contain trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennial or annual flowers, turf and organic or inorganic mulches. Living plant materials must cover at least seventy-five (75) percent of the landscaped area.

8. If a premise is subsequently subdivided after a freestanding sign allocation has been established for the premise, the subsequently created parcels shall share the freestanding sign allocation; shall share the same freestanding sign pole or monument; and, the owner/subdivider is responsible for allocating the freestanding signage amongst the separately created parcels at the time of each sale or lease.
- C. ~~Projecting signs. Each business with frontage on a public right-of-way is allowed one (1) projecting sign along the public right-of-way. (See Exhibit 60-9 of this chapter.)~~
 1. ~~A projecting sign may be used instead of, but not in addition to, a freestanding sign.~~
 2. ~~Projecting signs and wall signs advertising the same business may not occupy the same building frontage.~~
 3. ~~A projecting sign is limited to sixteen (16) square feet plus one (1) additional square foot for each three (3) feet of linear building footage in excess of fifty (50) feet to a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet.~~
 4. ~~Projecting signs must not project over public property.~~

17.60.4.060 Montana ExpoPark, Multi Sports Park, Legion Ball Park Don Olsen Field, American Fields, Riverview Little League, Centene Stadium and the Siebel Soccer Park

Montana ExpoPark, Multi Sports Park, Legion Ball Park and the Soccer Park Don Olsen Field, American Fields, Riverview Little League, Centene Stadium and the Siebel Soccer Park are unique public properties that may conduct some commercial operations within the City of Great Falls. The following regulations apply to these properties:

- A. Signs internal to the ~~Montana ExpoPark, Multi Sports and Legion Ball Park~~ **properties listed in this section** that are not intended to be visible from public rights-of-way are exempt from all requirements of this chapter.
- B. Permanent Freestanding signs are permitted at each primary entrance.
 1. Montana ExpoPark: 3rd Street NW, the Northwest Bypass, 6th Street NW and the corner of 3rd Street and the Northwest Bypass.
 - a. Height limit: Twenty-five (25) feet.
 - b. Area limit: Two hundred (200) square feet per sign.
 2. **Don Olsen Field, American Fields, Riverview Little League, Centene Stadium Legion Ball Park:** the corner of 25th Street N and River Drive.
 - a. Height limit: Twenty (20) feet.
 - b. Area limit: One hundred (100) square feet.
 3. Multi Sports Park: One (1) sign not to exceed ten (10) feet in height.
 4. **Siebel Soccer Park:** One (1) sign not to exceed ten (10) feet in height per frontage.
- C. Temporary event banners are allowed by permit.

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1. ~~Montana ExpoPark – t~~ **Temporary** ~~event banners not exceeding forty-eight (48)~~ **sixty four (64)** square feet, may be displayed on the fence, ~~even if the fence is located in the public-rights-of-way, on 3rd St. NW, the Northwest Bypass and 6th St. NW. The Montana ExpoPark will pay an annual permit fee as may be set by City Commission resolution to cover the temporary banners.~~
 2. ~~Legion Ball Park, Multi Sports and Soccer Park – one (1) temporary event banner not exceeding sixty (60) square feet is allowed per frontage.~~
 3. ~~Temporary banners must be well maintained. Banners that become torn, ripped or damaged must be removed or replaced immediately.~~
 3. 4. ~~Banners must be of professional quality.~~
- D. Wall signage maximum: Ten (10) percent of the wall area per frontage, excluding service delivery areas and parapets. (See Exhibit 60-7 and Exhibit 60-1 of this chapter.)

Article 5 OFF-PREMISE SIGNS

Sections:

[17.60.5.010 Directional free-standing signs.](#)

[17.60.5.020 Billboards signs.](#)

[17.60.5.030 Bench/transit shelter signs.](#)

17.60.5.010 Directional free-standing signs.

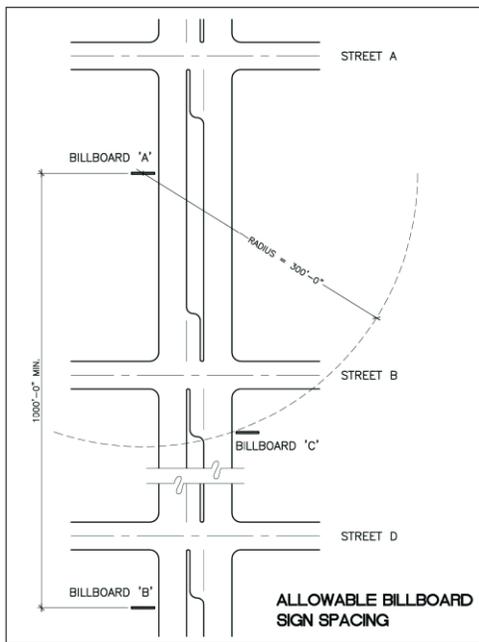
An off-premise directional sign directs attention to business located on a separate premise. Off-premise directional signage is allowed in commercial and industrial districts with the following restrictions:

- A. The sign area of the off-premise directional sign must be included in the total signage allotment for the premise upon which the sign is erected. Maximum size of an off-premise directional sign is two hundred (200) square feet. or
- B. One (1) off-premise directional sign may be allowed for a business whose location is not visible and accessible to motoring public from a major arterial street and who cannot meet the requirements of part A above. In these special situations, the Board of Adjustment may grant a Special Exception under the following conditions:
 1. The location of the business precludes placement of a sign that is visible from a major roadway.
 2. Other factors:
 - a. Off-premises signs are not allowed within residential zoning districts.
 - b. Special Exception signs are limited to the height allowed in the district the sign is erected and to thirty (30) square feet in area.
- C. If a business qualifies for a Special Exception off-premise sign and elects to combine its allowable signage area with that of the premise, the total square footage of the resulting freestanding sign identifying the two (2) businesses may equal the on-premise maximum freestanding sign allocation plus the thirty (30) square feet for the special exception off-premise sign.

17.60.5.020 Billboards signs.

- A. Purpose. The intent of this section is to regulate the visual impact of billboard signs; to improve the appearance of designated entryways and scenic corridors; and to encourage compatibility between billboard signs and neighboring property, e.g. parks, schools, places of worship, and residential areas.
- B. Prohibited locations. A billboard is an off-premise sign and may not be located on the same premise as that of the business advertised by the billboard. Billboard signs erected after the effective date of this ordinance shall comply with the following location limitations:

Exhibit 60-14. Allowable Billboard Sign Spacing



- 1. Billboard signs may only be erected in C-2, C-3, I-1 and I-2 zoning districts.
- 2. Billboard signs may not be erected within two hundred (200) feet of the edge of a roadway surface along the following entry and scenic corridors known as Billboard-free Areas:
 - a. 10th Avenue South from I-15 Exit #278 to the intersection of 10th Avenue South and 2nd Street South
 - b. Along 10th Avenue South from 54th Street to the eastern limit of the City
 - c. River Drive from the southernmost City limits to 38th Street North
 - d. Central Avenue West from 6th Street to the east bank of the Missouri River
 - e. Along the Old Havre Highway from the intersection of 15th Street to Smelter Avenue
- 3. Billboard signs are prohibited in the following areas:
 - a. All zoning districts other than C-2, C-3, I-1 and I-2.

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- b. Within three hundred (300) feet in any direction of a public park, public or private school, college or university, church, cemetery, courthouse, Civic Center, or public museum.
 - c. Within one hundred and fifty (150) feet in any direction of any lot or parcel that is zoned residential or used as a primary residential use of any kind.
 - d. Within one thousand (1,000) feet of any other billboard sign, measured on the same side of the street. (See Exhibit 60-14.)
 - e. Within three hundred (300) feet of any other billboard sign on a crossing street located on the same side of the street. (See Exhibit 60-14.)
4. Minimum spacing requirement shall not apply to two (2) faces that share a support structure and face different directions.
- C. Billboard standards. Billboards established after the effective dates of this Code shall conform to the following standards:
1. The maximum sign display area for any one (1) billboard face shall be two hundred fifty (250) square feet. Billboards located within the interstate corridor are exempt from this standard.
 2. In the Interstate Corridor within the City of Great Falls, the maximum display area for any billboard face shall be four hundred thirty-two (432) square feet.
 3. Billboards may be single-faced or double-faced, but no billboard shall contain more than one (1) face on each side of the display. The surface display area may not exceed a total area of five hundred (500) square feet per structure.
 4. Billboard sign face limitations exclude border, trim, base or apron supports or other structural members, but include cut-outs, extensions or protrusions. Size limits apply to each sign face of a structure. Sign faces may be placed back-to-back with no more than one (1) display per face.
 5. The maximum overall height of a billboard sign shall not exceed thirty (30) feet above the grade of the roadway to which the sign is oriented. However, if the sign is located in the Riverfront Corridor, it is limited to twenty (20) feet above the grade of the roadway to which the sign is oriented.
 6. Billboard structures must be located entirely on private property. No portion of any structure or sign face may overhang the public right-of-way.
- D. Installation, appearance and maintenance. All billboards must be kept in good repair and maintained according to the following standards:
1. During periods of repair, alteration or copy change the facing may be removed for a maximum of forty-eight (48) consecutive hours.
 2. All billboard signs must have the owner's name firmly attached to the sign structure.
 3. Billboard structures must be single pole.
 4. Billboard structures may not be placed on the roof or wall of a building or structure.
 5. Sign structures must be painted, anodized or otherwise finished in earth tones of brown and green, including beige, mocha, forest and hunter green; but not teal or any fluorescent color. The paint or finish must not be peeling or obviously worn.
- E. Maintenance and repair requirements.
1. If the Director of Planning and Community Development finds that any billboard, except one (1) that is nonconforming, is not maintained in good repair and has not deteriorated more than fifty (50) percent of its replacement value, the Director of Planning and Community Development will notify the owner and order him to repair the billboard within a specified time allowing at least ten (10) calendar days.

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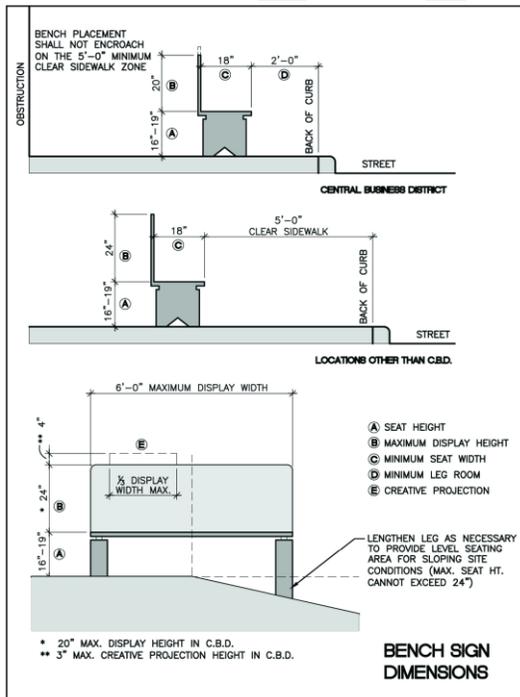
2. If the Director of Planning and Community Development finds that the billboard has deteriorated more than fifty (50) percent of its replacement value, or is not repaired within the time specified in the repair notice, the Director will notify the owner of the billboard and the owner of the real property that the billboard is to be removed from the property within a specified time.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.5.030 Bench/transit shelter signs.

- A. Bench signs are defined as off-premise signs placed upon benches that are located on public property including sidewalks, surfaced boulevards and immediately adjacent private property. After the date of this ordinance bench signs in newly annexed areas will be limited to two (2) per intersection.
- B. Transit shelter signs are defined as off-premise signs placed upon transit shelters. ~~They are~~ **Transit shelters are usually** located upon public property including sidewalks, surfaced boulevards and immediately adjacent private property.
- C. Bench sign designs must be submitted in triplicate to the Planning and Community Development Department. Designs must be approved prior to permit issuance. Benches may be no longer than six (6) feet. They must be placed on concrete pads. A one-time design review fee as may be set by City Commission resolution for each bench design must be paid prior to permit issuance. (See Exhibit 60-15.)
- D. **Transit shelters are permitted through Chapter 12.4.040. This chapter only pertaining to the specific dimensional standards of signage upon permitted shelter.**

Exhibit 60-15. Bench Sign Dimensions



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- D. Bench **and Transit shelters** signs in the Central Business Core District are limited to a total of fifty-six (56) **square feet total sign**, and must be approved by the Planning and Community Development Department for compatibility with the streetscape program. A one-time design review fee as may be set by City Commission resolution for each bench sign design must be paid prior to permit issuance.
- E. Transit shelter signs are limited to a maximum of fifty (50) percent of the square footage of walls exposed to vehicular traffic (**both parallel or perpendicular to the roadway**).
- F. Bench **and** transit shelter sign permits are issued only to holders of insurance equal to that required for a **specialty sign** contractor ~~Class B~~ license (**working in the boulevard**).
- G. The permit fee for occupancy of public space by the bench **or** transit shelter sign is established by a resolution of the City Commission. The annual fee per sign is payable one (1) year in advance and is due prior to permit issuance. The permit fee may be renewed annually by the permit holder by January 15th for the current year. Fees may **not** be pro-rated for periods less than one (1) year.
- H. The location of each bench **or** transit shelter sign must be approved by the Director of Planning and Community Development or designee. ~~The~~ **Location of** bench may not be located closer than three (3) feet to a fire hydrant. A minimum of five (5) feet of sidewalk width must be left unobstructed. (See Exhibit 60-15)
- I. The owner, leaseholder of private property or authorized agent located nearest to the public property upon which the bench **or** transit shelter sign is proposed must approve the location by signing the permit application prior to permit issuance. The approval may be withdrawn at any time by contacting the Planning and Community Development Department. **Bench locations may only be changed through submittal and approval of a new application.**
- J. Bench **or** transit shelter signs are not permitted in districts of the City zoned residential unless the property has received an approved Conditional Use for offices, hospitals, medical clinics, **worship facility**, or ~~colleges~~ **education facility**.
- K. Bench **or** transit shelter signs are permitted in the PLI district only with approval of the appropriate City department head or adjacent property owner if not a City-owned parcel.
- L. Bench/transit shelter signs placed in City parks by the Park and Recreation Department are exempt from the provisions of this section.
- M. The bench **or** transit shelter sign permit may be revoked at any time for lack of adequate maintenance or safety, after which the ~~bench~~ sign will be removed by the owner within seven (7) days. If not removed, the City may remove the sign which becomes City property. The sign owner may reclaim the sign within ten (10) working days of removal by paying removal costs as may be set by City Commission resolution. After such time, the sign may be destroyed.
- N. Bench **or** transit shelter signs are limited to one (1) bench **or** **transit shelter sign** per City block face not to exceed one (1) bench **or** **transit shelter sign** per adjoining premise.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

Article 6 DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Sections:

[17.60.6.010 Electrical signs.](#)

[17.60.6.020 Wind and seismic forces.](#)

[17.60.6.030 Material requirements.](#)

17.60.6.010 Electrical signs.

All sign structures to which electrical components are attached must be erected, repaired and maintained in accordance with the specifications outlined in Chapter 6, Article 600, of the current adopted edition of the National Electrical Code. **Signs may be illuminated to a maximum standard lighting of 5.0 foot candles at the property lines.**

~~A. Illumination. Signs may be illuminated subject to the following restrictions:~~

- ~~1. Incandescent lamps may not exceed forty (40) watt level, unless protected by a sun screen.~~
- ~~2. Reflector lamps must have sun screens except for indirect flood lighting.~~
- ~~3. Signs that cast beams or rays of light directly onto any portion of public streets or avenues, or that create glare, or impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or otherwise interfere with operation of a motor vehicle are prohibited.~~
- ~~4. Transformers may not exceed sixty (60) milliamperes on exposed tubing and animated portions.~~

17.60.6.020 Wind and seismic forces.

Signs and sign structures must be designed and constructed to resist wind and seismic forces **as specified** in the current adopted edition of the International Building Code.

17.60.6.030 Material requirements.

Sign structure and construction material must conform to the specifications of the current adopted edition of the International Building Code for quality and grade.

- A. Restrictions and combustible materials. All structural members must comply with the specifications of the current adopted edition of the International Building Code.
- B. Nonstructural trim. Nonstructural trim may be wood, metal, approved plastics or any combination thereof.
- C. Fastenings. Fastenings must conform to the Engineering Regulations of the current adopted edition of the International Building Code.

Article 7 PERMIT, INSPECTIONS AND LICENSES

Sections:

[17.60.7.010 Permit required.](#)

[17.60.7.020 Sign permit-application.](#)

[17.60.7.030 Owner-erected sign permit.](#)

[17.60.7.040 Fees and payment.](#)

[17.60.7.050 Inspection.](#)

[17.60.7.060 Sign certificate required.](#)

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[17.60.7.070 License.](#)

[17.60.7.080 Insurance and bond.](#)

[17.60.7.090 Maintenance and repair.](#)

[17.60.7.100 Abandoned/moribund signs.](#)

17.60.7.010 Permit required.

No sign may be erected, re-erected, constructed, altered or refaced until a sign permit has been issued by the Director of Planning and Community Development ~~or designee an authorized representative~~. For exemptions to this section, see Section 17.60.2.020 of this Code.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.7.020 Sign permit-application.

- A. The Planning and Community Development Department takes applications for sign permits.
- B. Each application must contain the location by street address of the proposed sign structure as well as the name and address of the sign owner and sign contractor or erector.
- C. The Director of Planning and Community Development or designee may require submittal documents prepared and designed by a structural engineer licensed by the State when in his/her opinion such information is necessary to insure compliance with the Building Code for the following:
 1. Freestanding signs
 2. Billboard signs
 3. Awning signs
 4. Projecting signs
 - 5. Reface of signs**
- ~~D. A sign permit shall be issued only to a licensed sign contractor except as provided in Section 17.60.7.030~~
- ~~E. Posting requirements. It is the responsibility of the sign erector/contractor or owner of the sign to attach to the sign, in a manner visible from the ground, the owner's name and/or the name of the sign erector company, the date of installation and the permit number.~~

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.7.030 Owner-erected sign permit.

~~Business-Owner~~ owner-erected signs may not be electrical. A ~~business~~ owner must obtain a permit for an owner-erected sign for the following unless the sign is exempt under section 17.60.2.020:

- A. A freestanding sign no larger than **thirty two (32)** ~~twelve (12)~~ square feet and no taller than six ~~(6)~~ feet above grade .

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- B. A wall sign that does not project over public right-of-way and is no larger than **thirty two (32) square feet** ~~twelve (12)~~.
- C. A temporary sign of non-rigid material or a sandwich board sign.

17.60.7.040 Fees and payment.

Sign Permit fees are established by City Commission resolution. If a sign requires re-inspection to verify compliance with this Code, a re-inspection fee will be assessed.

17.60.7.050 Inspection.

- A. All signs requiring a permit are subject to the inspection of the Director of Planning and Community Development or designee. Signs erected without the required inspection will be taken down until the required inspection is complete at the cost of the sign installer.
- B. All signs containing electrical wiring are subject to the provisions of the current adopted edition of the National Electrical Code.
- C. All electrical signs, including neon signage and neon tubing, must be inspected while they are on the ground prior to installation for compliance with Article 600 of the National Electric Code.
- D. All electric signs must be inspected during sign face replacement or sign face redecoration. Inspections will be performed on site and in place with the sign face removed. All electric signs must meet current specifications in **National Electric Code**, Chapter 6, Article 600 before sign faces are reinstalled.
- E. All signs may be reinspected at the discretion of the Director of Planning and Community Development or designee when in his/her opinion inspection is required to ensure compliance with this Code.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.7.060 Sign certificate required.

- A. Any person engaged in the installation or repair of electrical signs, including outline and accent lighting commonly known as neon must have an individual sign electrician/journeyman's certificate, or be currently licensed as a master or journeyman electrician by the State of Montana and the City of Great Falls.
- B. ~~A sign erector certificate is required for persons doing work with non-electrical signs requiring permit except under Section 17.60.7.030~~
- C. Examination. Director of Planning and Community Development, or designee, will arrange for examination of the applicant's knowledge of sign installation, erection and/or wiring.
 - 1. A person desiring a sign electrician/journeyman's certificate must request, in writing, a qualification examination from the department.
 - a. Written requests must include proof of two (2) years experience prior to application and include the application fee.
 - b. Successful applicants must receive a score of seventy-five (75) percent on the examination.
 - c. Unsuccessful applicants will be required to wait ninety (90) days before applying for re-examination.

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2. Examination is required for each initial application. Examination is not required for license renewal unless more than thirty (30) days have passed since the expiration.
 3. The Director of Planning and Community Development **or designee** will authorize issuance of the appropriate certificate upon the applicant's successful completion of the examination.
- D. Certificate fees for sign electrician/journeyman, ~~sign erector~~ and examination fees are established by City Commission resolution.
- E. All certificates or special licenses expire on December 31st of the year in which the certificate or special license is issued, unless otherwise specified.
- F. Renewals may be obtained on or before the expiration date.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.7.070 License.

A person or a firm engaged in the business of installing, altering, maintaining or repairing signs in the City of Great Falls must adhere to the following requirements regarding sign contractor licensing:

- A. Sign contractor's Class A license. A sign contractor's Class A license is required for the fabrication, installation, repair, alteration and/or modification of electrical wires, apparatus, raceways, conduit or any other portion of electrical signs. An applicant for a Class A Contractor's license must show evidence that he/she, or at least one (1) member of the firm or corporation, holds a current sign electrician/journeyman certificate issued by the City of Great Falls.
- B. ~~Sign contractor's Class B license. A sign contractor's Class B license is required for the installation, erection and/or maintenance of non-illuminated signs. The applicant must employ an individual with a current sign erector's certificate issued by the City of Great Falls.~~
- C. License fees are established by City Commission resolution.
- D. Certificates and/or special licenses expire on December 31st of the year in which they are issued, unless otherwise specified. Renewal licenses may be obtained on or before the expiration date.

17.60.7.080 Insurance and bond.

- A. Sign contractor's Class A license. Prior to receiving a Sign contractor's Class A license, an applicant must file a current commercial general liability insurance policy or written certificate issued by an insurance carrier authorized to do business in the State with the Planning and Community Development Department.
- B. ~~Sign contractor's Class B license. An applicant for a Sign contractor's Class B license must file with the Planning and Community Development Department a commercial general liability insurance policy or written certificate with limits established by City Commission resolution and issued by an insurance carrier authorized to do business in the State.~~
- C. Insurance must be kept in full force as a condition of licensure. In the event of insurance cancellation, the sign contractor's license automatically terminates.
- D. Payment is required of a license bond in an amount established by City Commission resolution.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

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17.60.7.090 Maintenance and repair.

~~signs~~ **All signs**, together with all types of supports including steel poles and structures, braces, guy wires, anchors, sign faces, sign cabinets, wood surfaces, plastic or sheet metal decorative trims and fasteners must be properly repaired and maintained.

- A. All painted surfaces must be free of rust, worn, loose and peeling paint.
- B. If the Director of Planning and Community Development **or designee** finds that any sign is not maintained in good repair and has not deteriorated more than 50% of its replacement value, he/she shall notify the owner and order him to repair the sign within a specified time allowing at least ten (10) calendar days.
- C. If the Director of Planning and Community Development **or designee** finds that the sign has deteriorated more than fifty (50) percent of its replacement value, or is not repaired within the time specified in the repair notice, the official will notify the owner of the sign and the owner of the real property on which said sign is located to remove the sign from the property within a specified time
- D. Upon receipt of proper notification, sign removal is the responsibility of the sign owner or the property owner.
- E. Failure by the sign owner to comply with a removal/repair notice will result in removal of the sign by the direction of the **Director of Planning and Community Development or designee** ~~Building Official~~. Removal costs will be assessed against the property.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.60.7.100 Abandoned/moribund signs.

A sign that no longer advertises a bona fide business, product or service must be removed within one hundred eighty (180) days. If the sign structure is conforming the structure may remain with a blank face unless the face advertises the premise for sale or lease. If the sign structure is nonconforming the structure must be made conforming or be removed.

Responsibility for removal lies with the owner of the sign or the owner, agent, or person upon whose premises the sign is located. If the sign owner or agent fails to remove the sign, the Director of Community Development or designee is authorized to remove the sign and assess the costs against the property.

Article 8 ENFORCEMENT

Sections:

[17.60.8.010 Enforcement.](#)

[17.60.8.020 Violations and penalties.](#)

[17.60.8.030 Removal of signs by the City.](#)

[17.60.8.040 Appeal.](#)

Chapter 60 SIGN CODE

17.60.8.010 Enforcement.

- A. The Director of Community Development or designee is authorized and directed to enforce all the provisions of this Code.
- B. Right-of-entry is defined by the current adopted edition of the International Building Code.

17.60.8.020 Violations and penalties.

It is unlawful for anyone to place, construct, enlarge, alter, move or convert any sign or sign structure in the City, or cause or permit the same to be done, contrary to or in violation of the provisions of this chapter. Anyone convicted of violating the provisions of this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor. Penalty for first conviction is a minimum fine of fifty dollars (\$50.00); penalty for the second conviction is a minimum fine of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00). Subsequent convictions will incur a fine of three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00) but not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00), or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or both. Each day an offense continues constitutes a separate offense.

17.60.8.030 Removal of signs by the City.

The Director of Community Development **or designee** will remove signs and sign structures that endanger the public. Examples of such signs and sign structures include abandoned, dangerous, and defective signs, as well as those for which permits have not been procured. The director will prepare a notice that describes the location, specifies the violation involved and states that if the sign is not removed or the violation is not corrected within ten (10) days, the sign will be removed in accordance with the provisions of this section.

All notices mailed by the City will be sent by regular mail and service of notice shall be deemed complete when the notice has been placed in the mail. Notification time periods in this section commence on the date notices are postmarked. A notice will be mailed to the owner of the property upon which the sign is located. When known, the owner of the sign and the occupant of the property will receive a written notice in the mail.

Temporary signs are specifically excluded from the ten (10) day notice requirement. Violators of the sections of this Code that pertain to temporary signs may be cited if noncomplying signs are still displayed twenty-four (24) hours after verbal notice to remove has been given.

The City may, without notice, cause immediate removal of a dangerous or defective sign or a temporary sign placed in the public right-of-way if the owner is not easily identified. Any sign removed by the City, may be claimed by the owner within ten (10) working days by paying removal costs as may be set by City Commission resolution. After such time, the sign may be destroyed.

For purposes of removal, the term "signs" means sign faces and structures.

17.60.8.040 Appeal.

Any person or persons, jointly or separately, aggrieved by any decision, order, or action of the Director of Community Development or a duly authorized representative as a result of the enforcement of this Code, may appeal to the Board of Adjustment as provided for in Article 34, Chapter 16 of this Title.

Exhibit 60-1

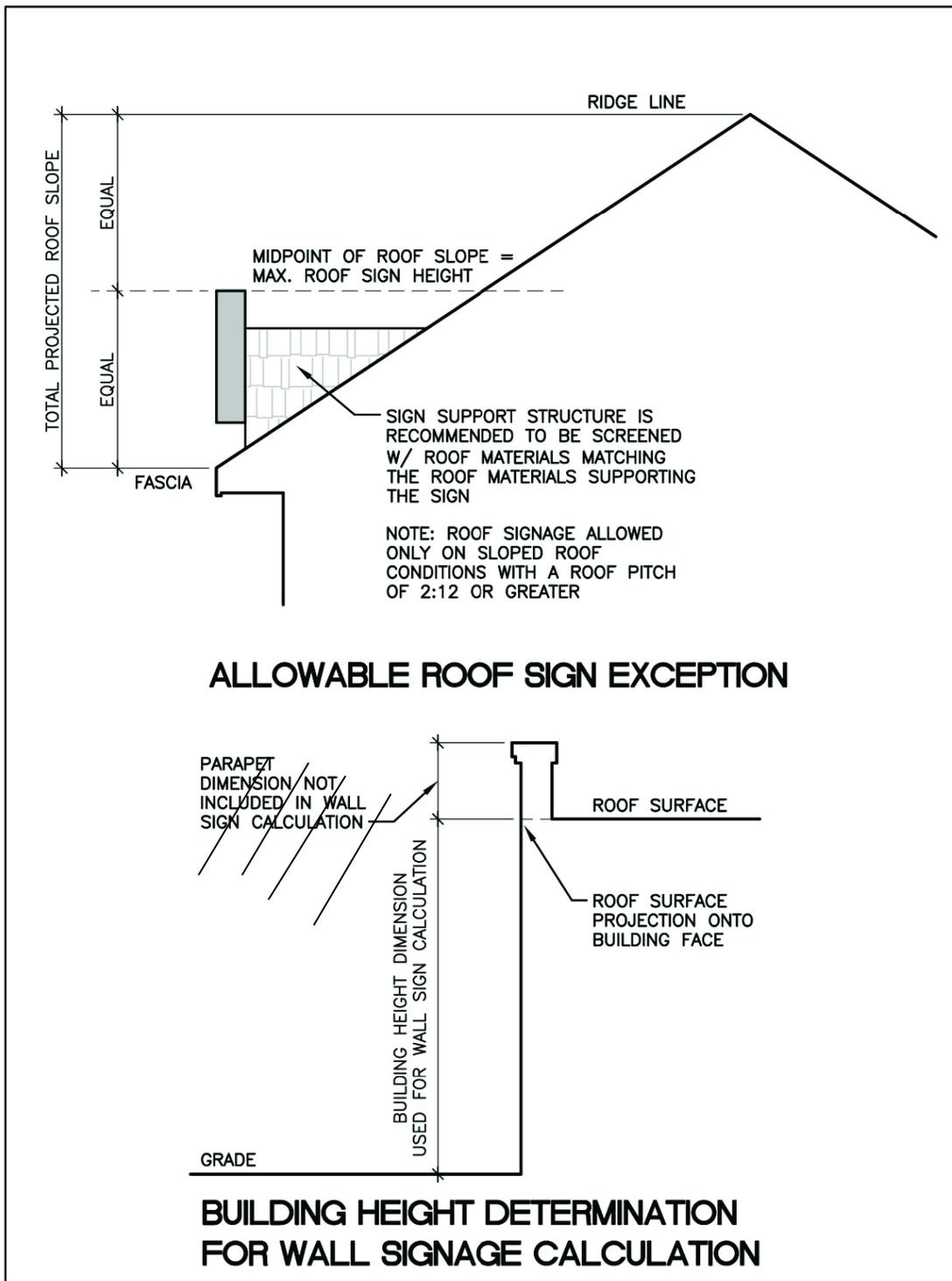
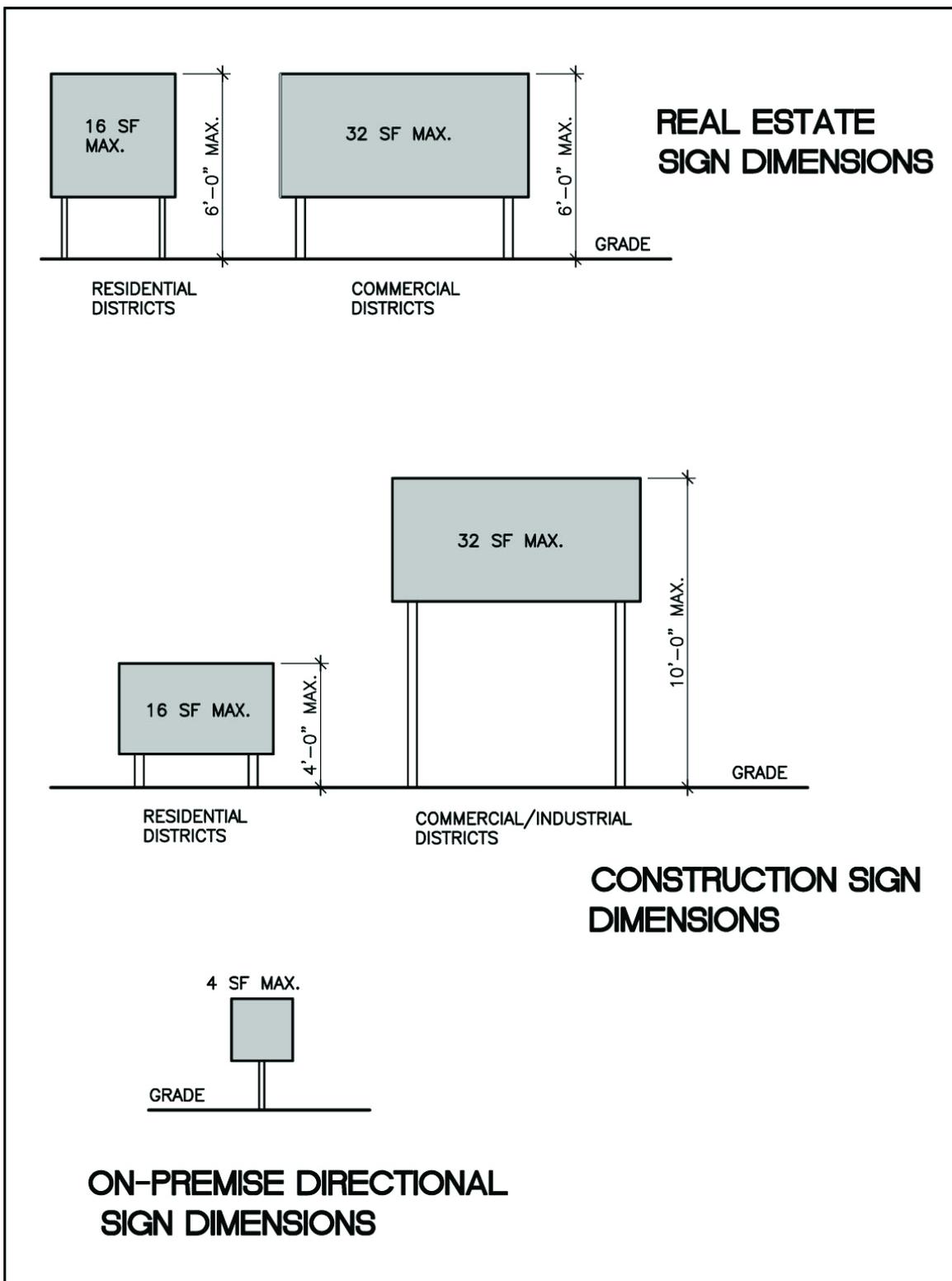


Exhibit 60-2



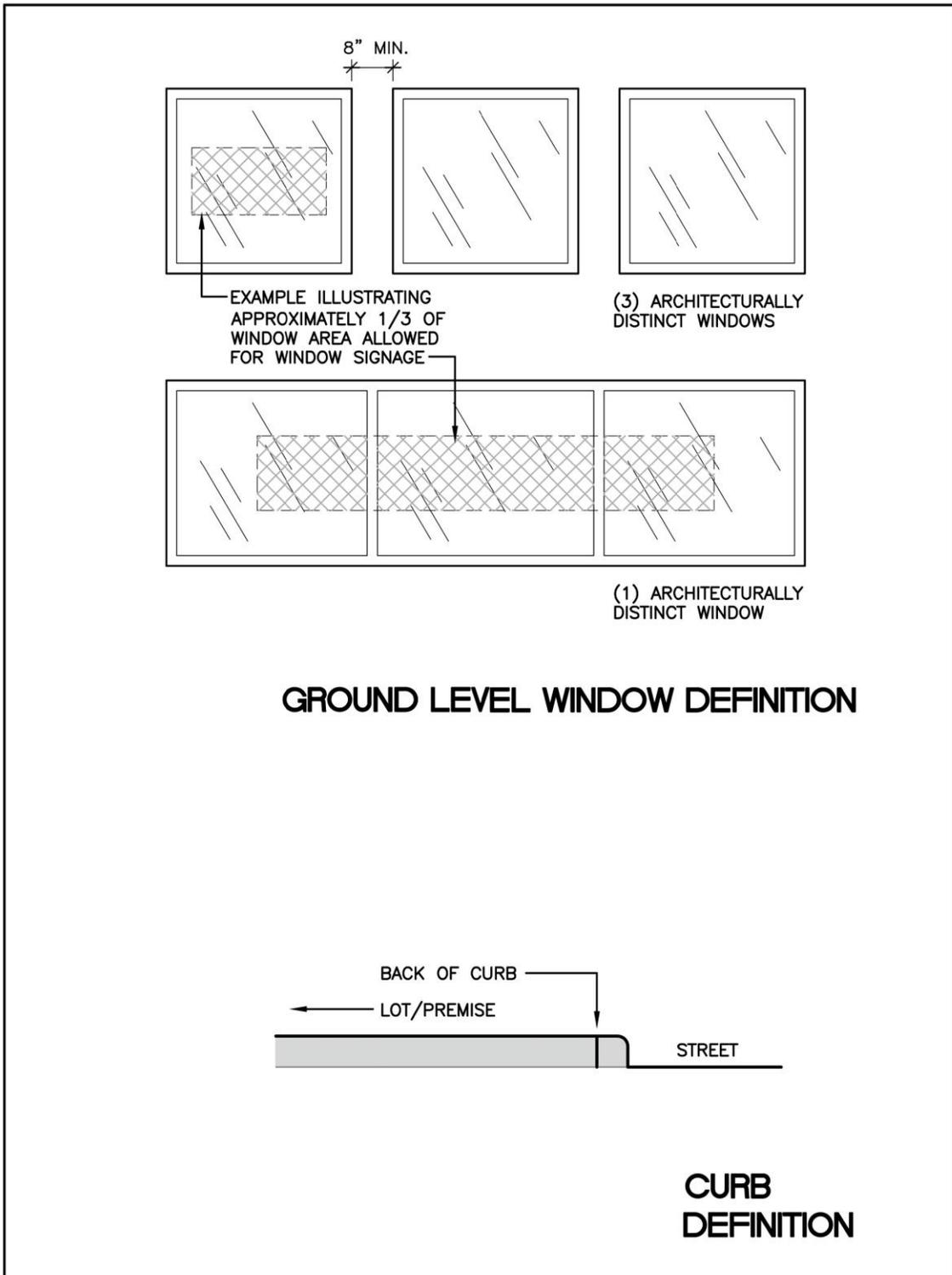


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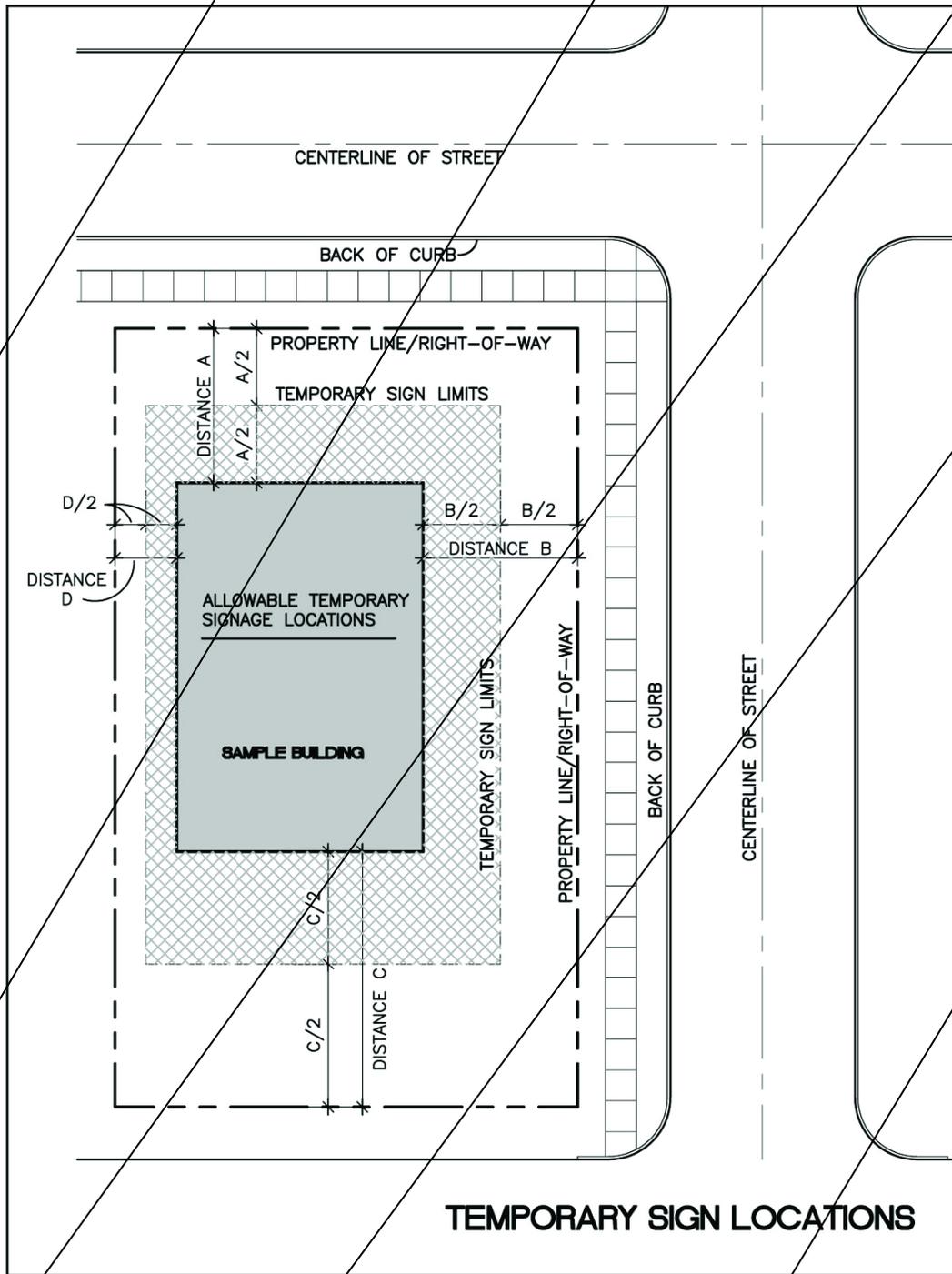


Exhibit 60-5

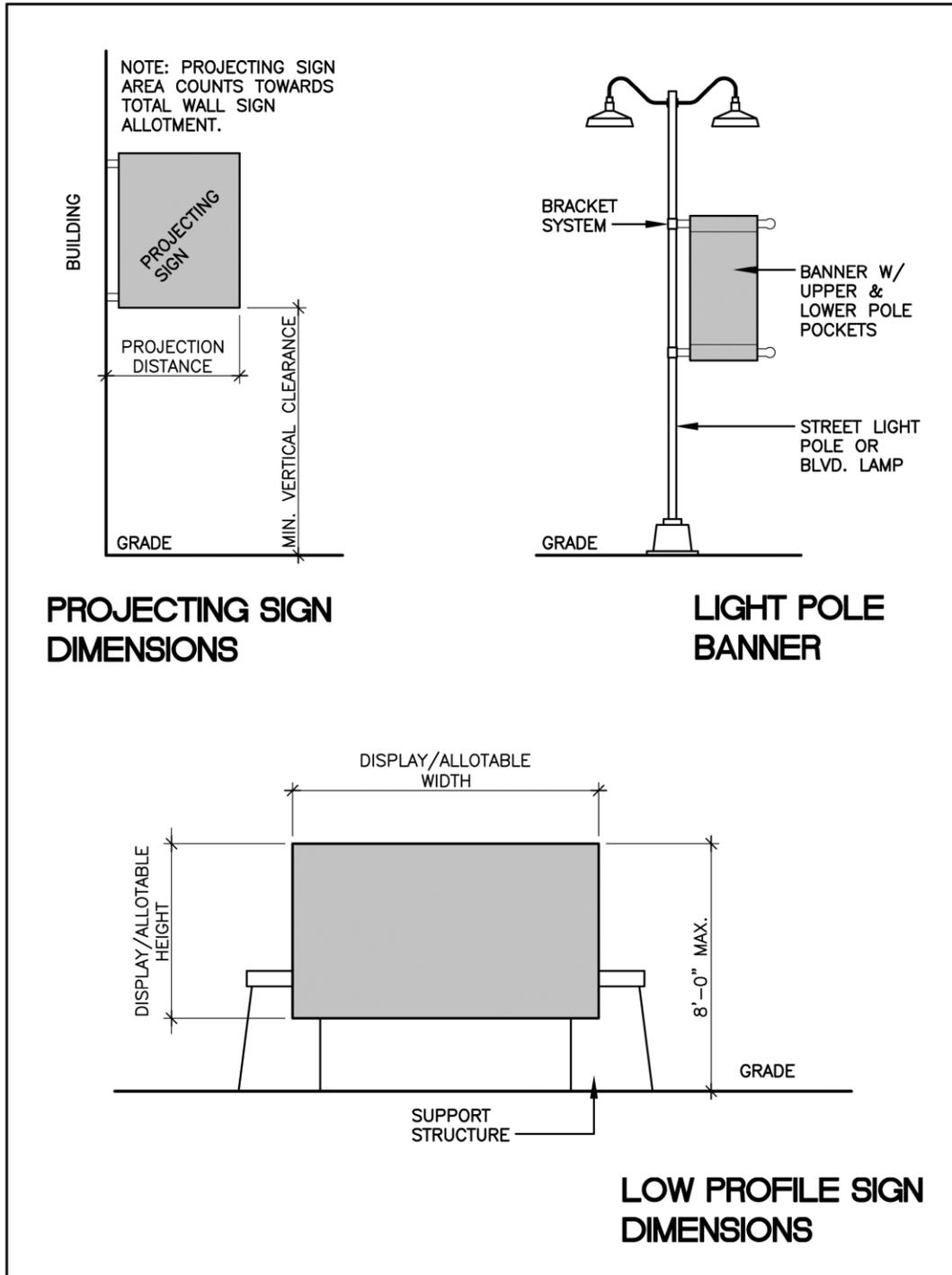


Exhibit 60-7

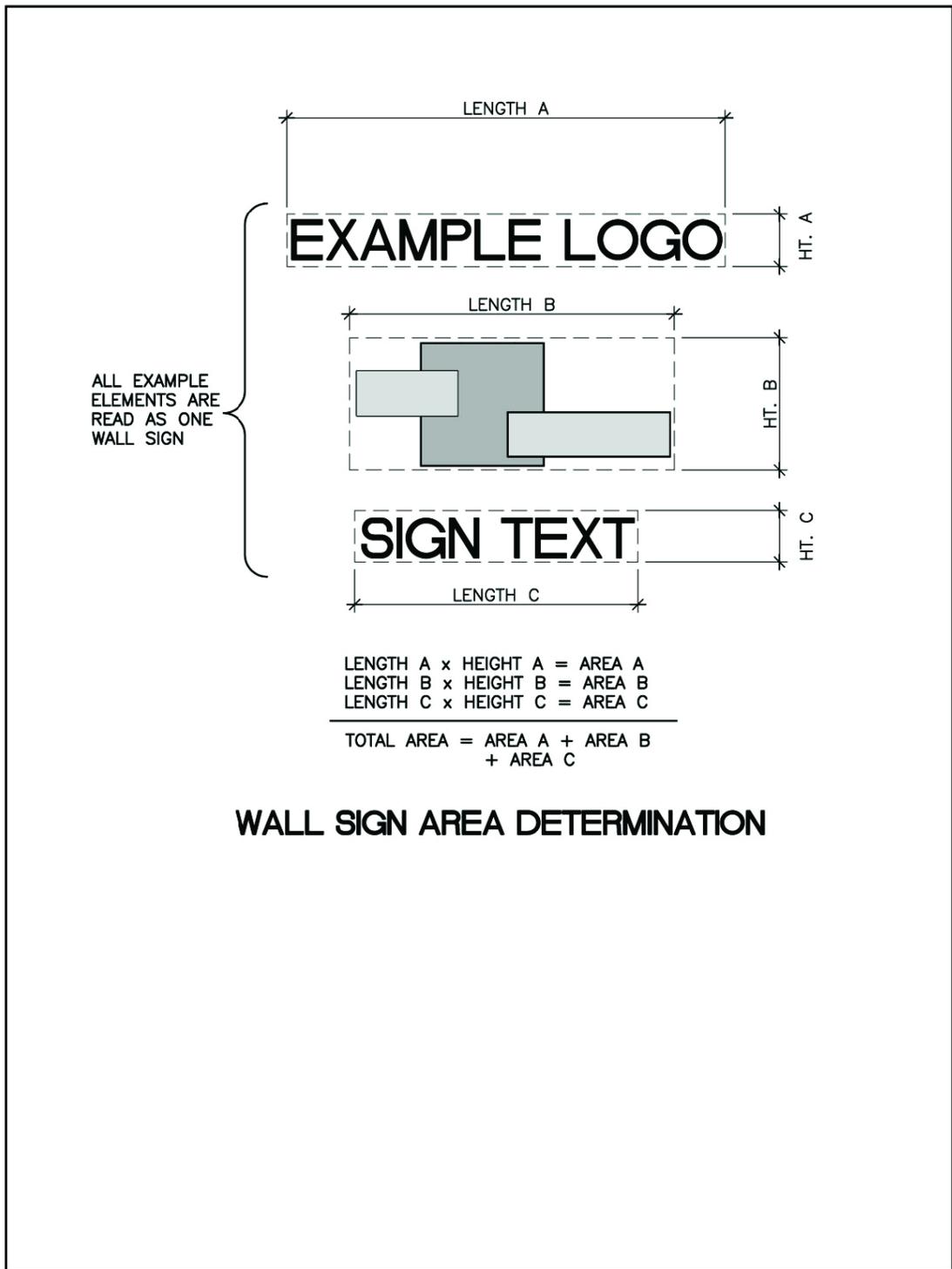


Exhibit 60-8

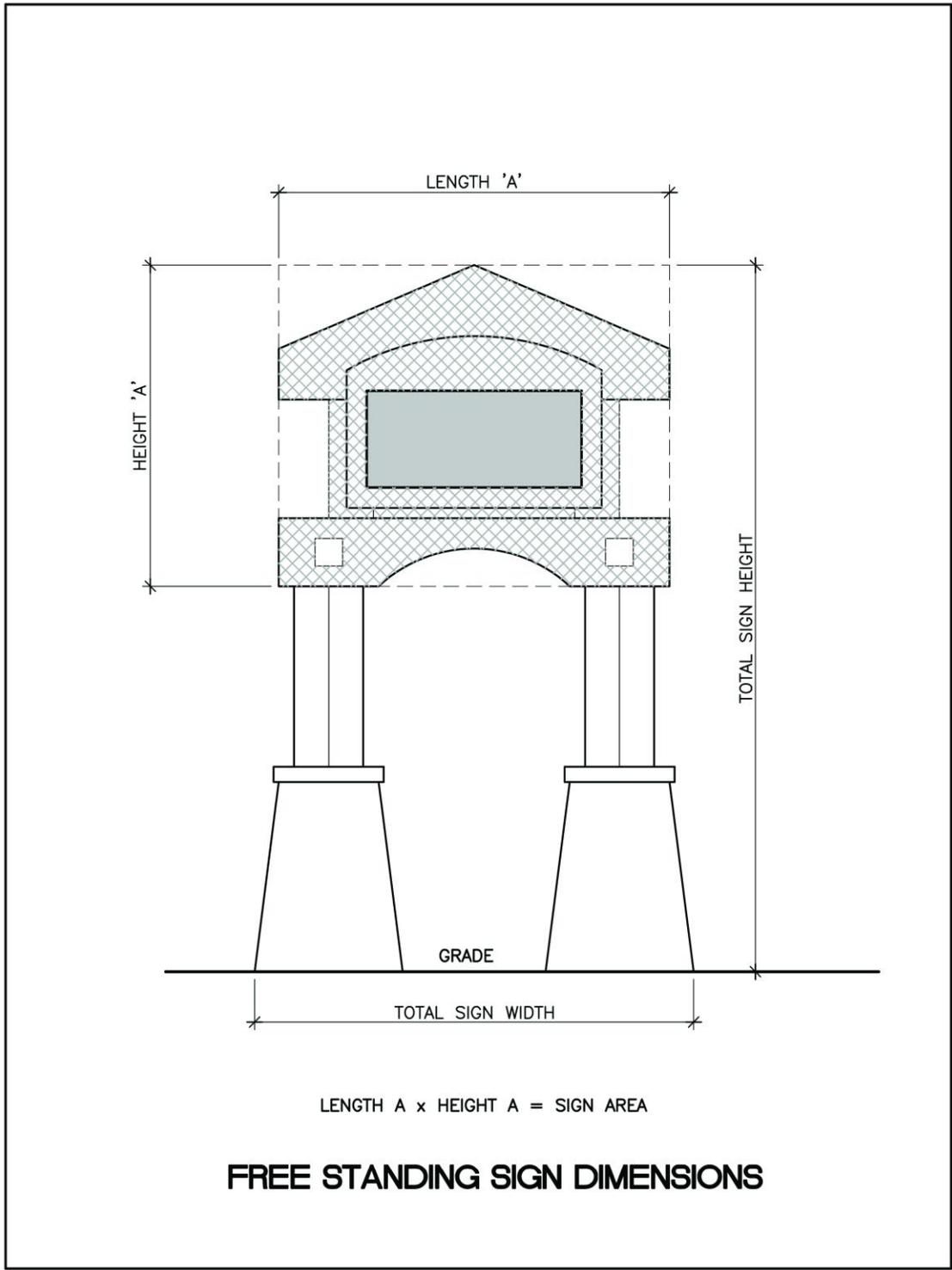


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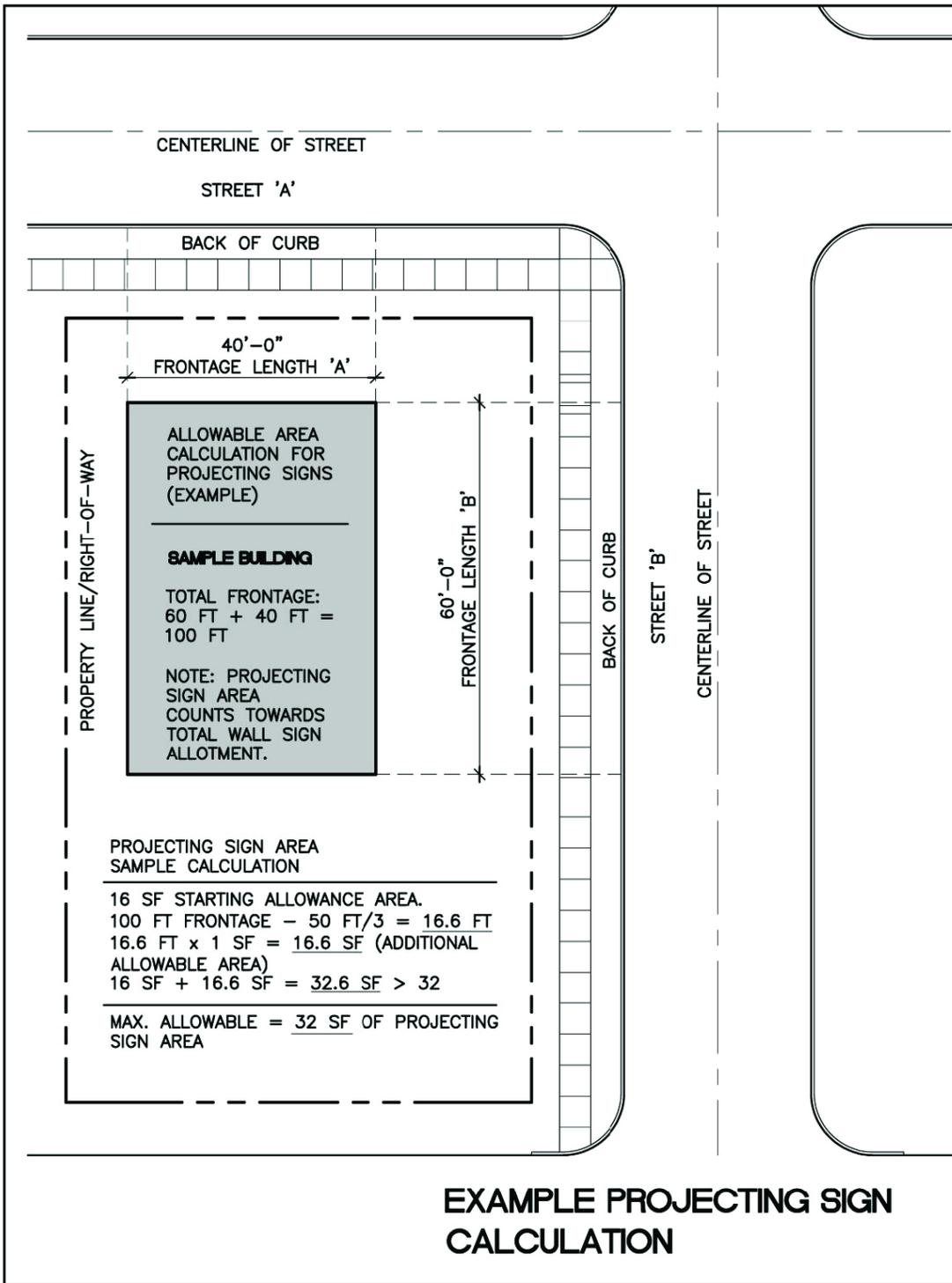


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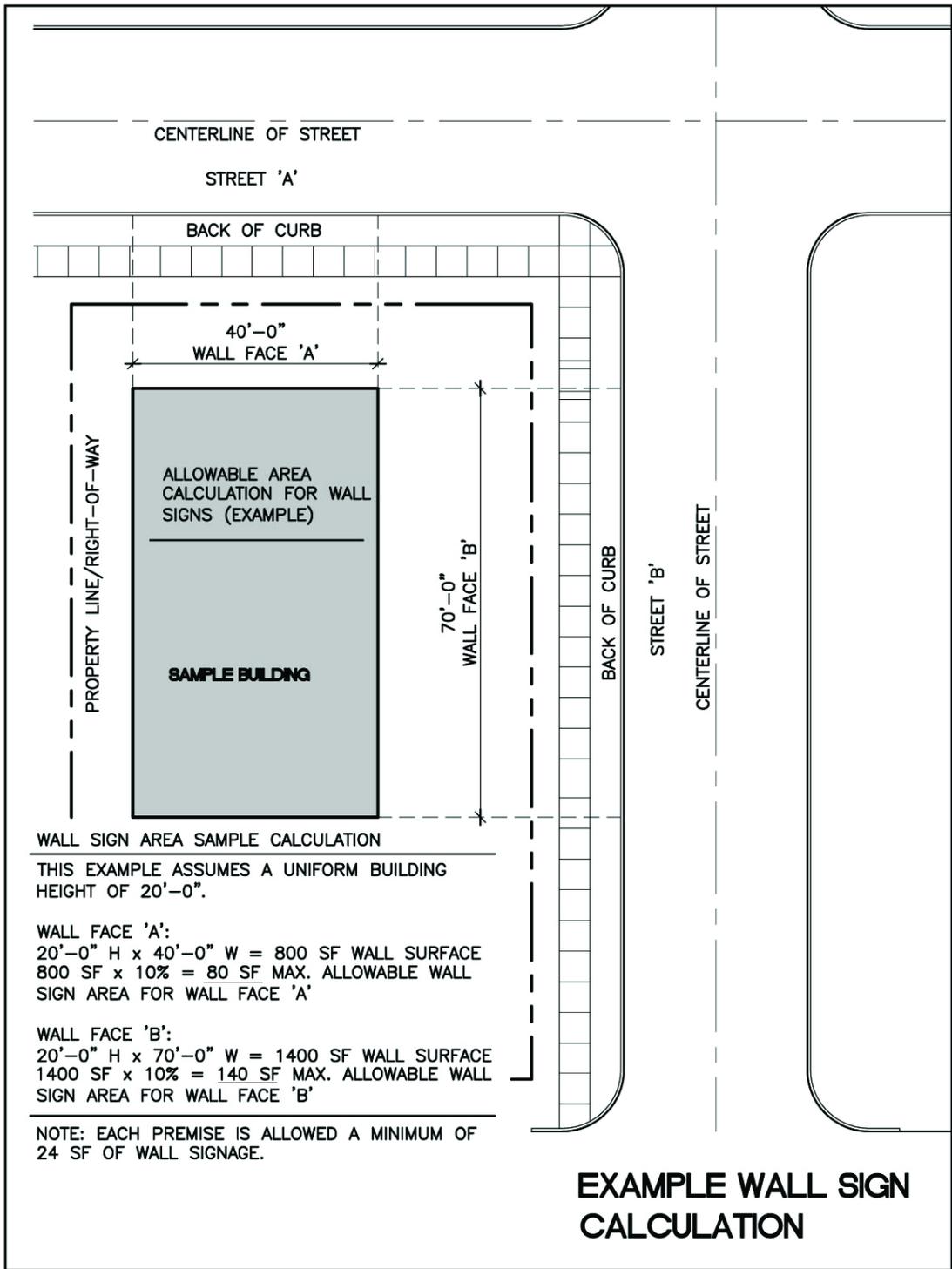


Exhibit 60-11

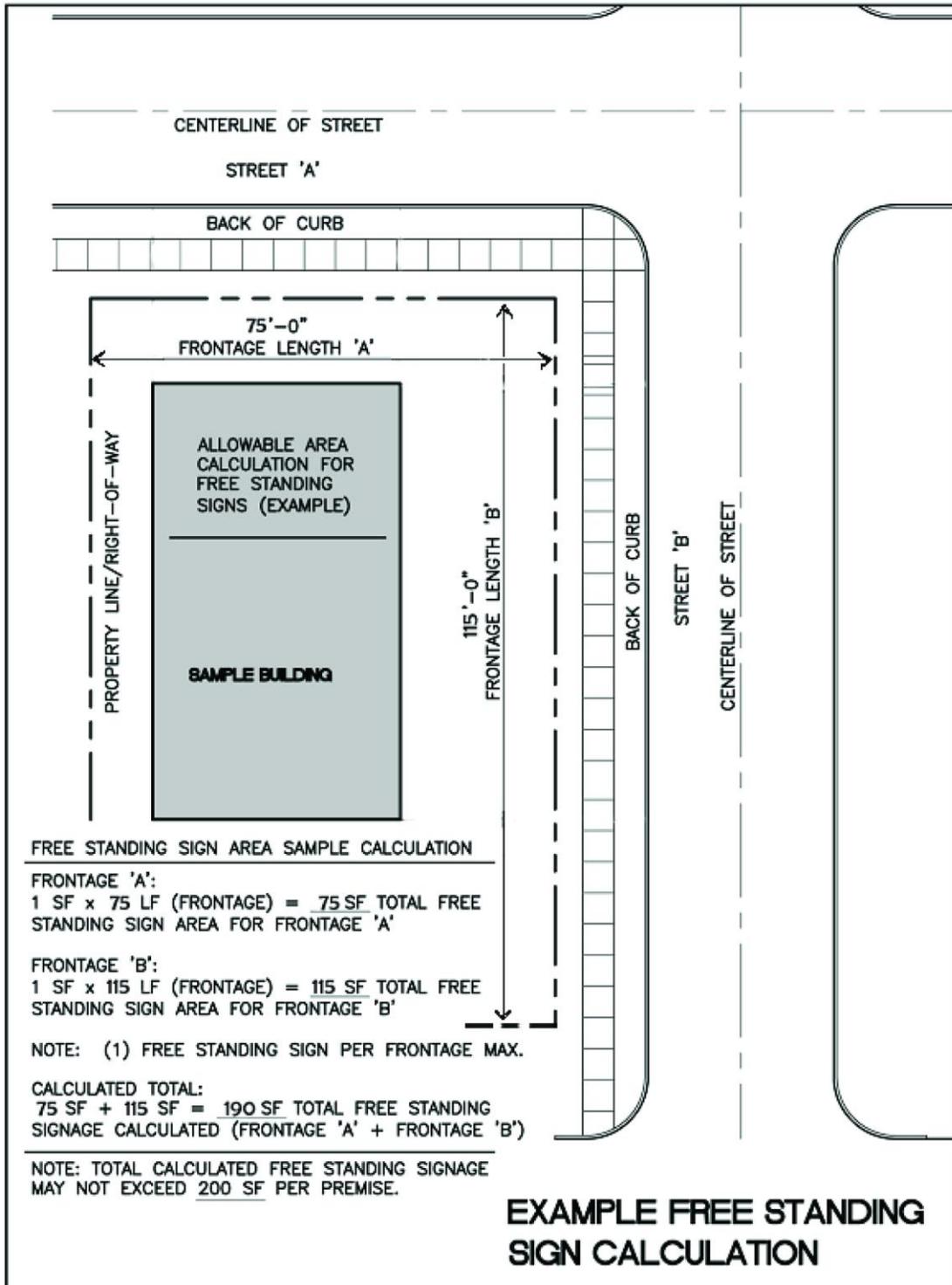


Exhibit 60-12

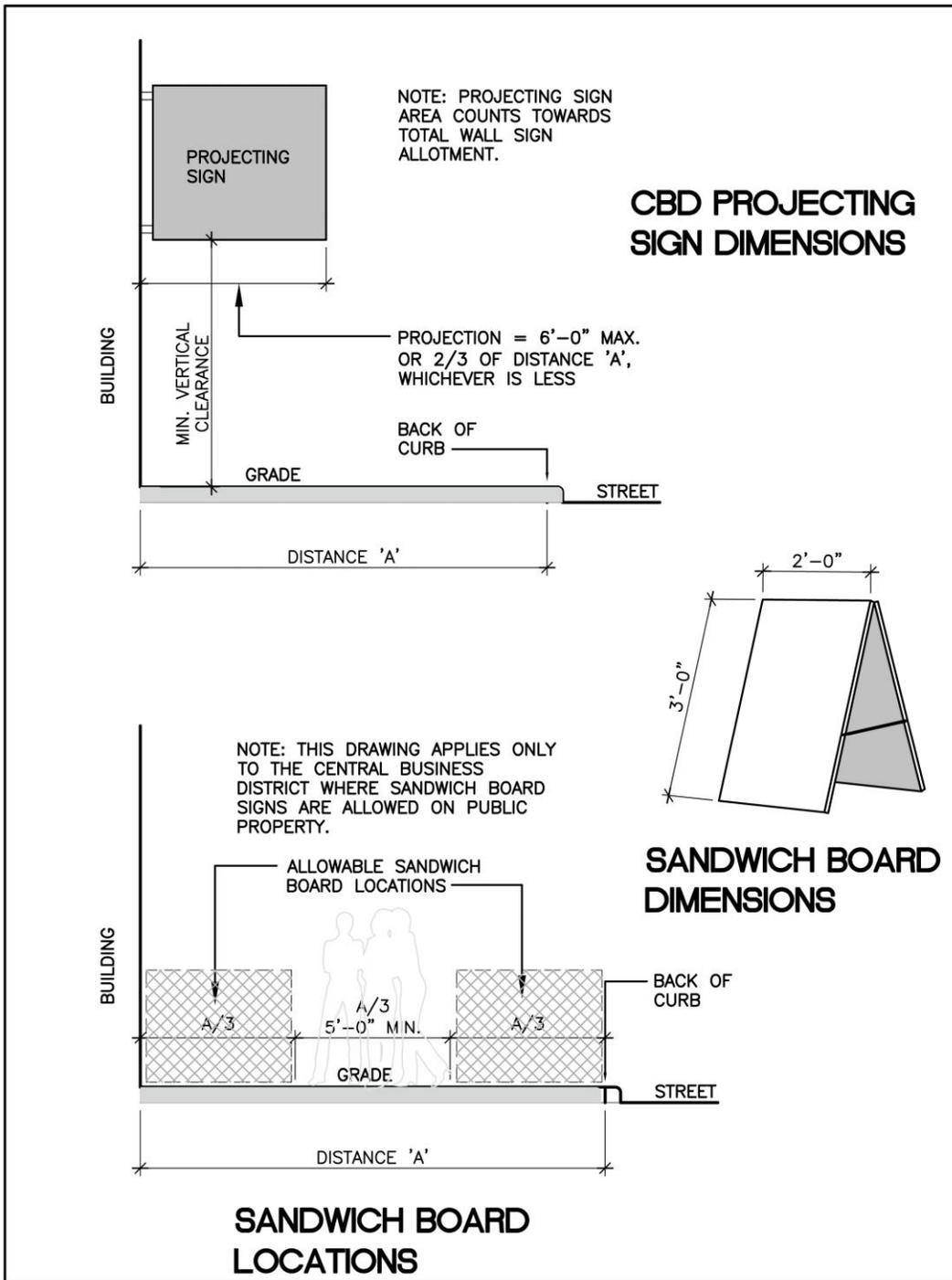
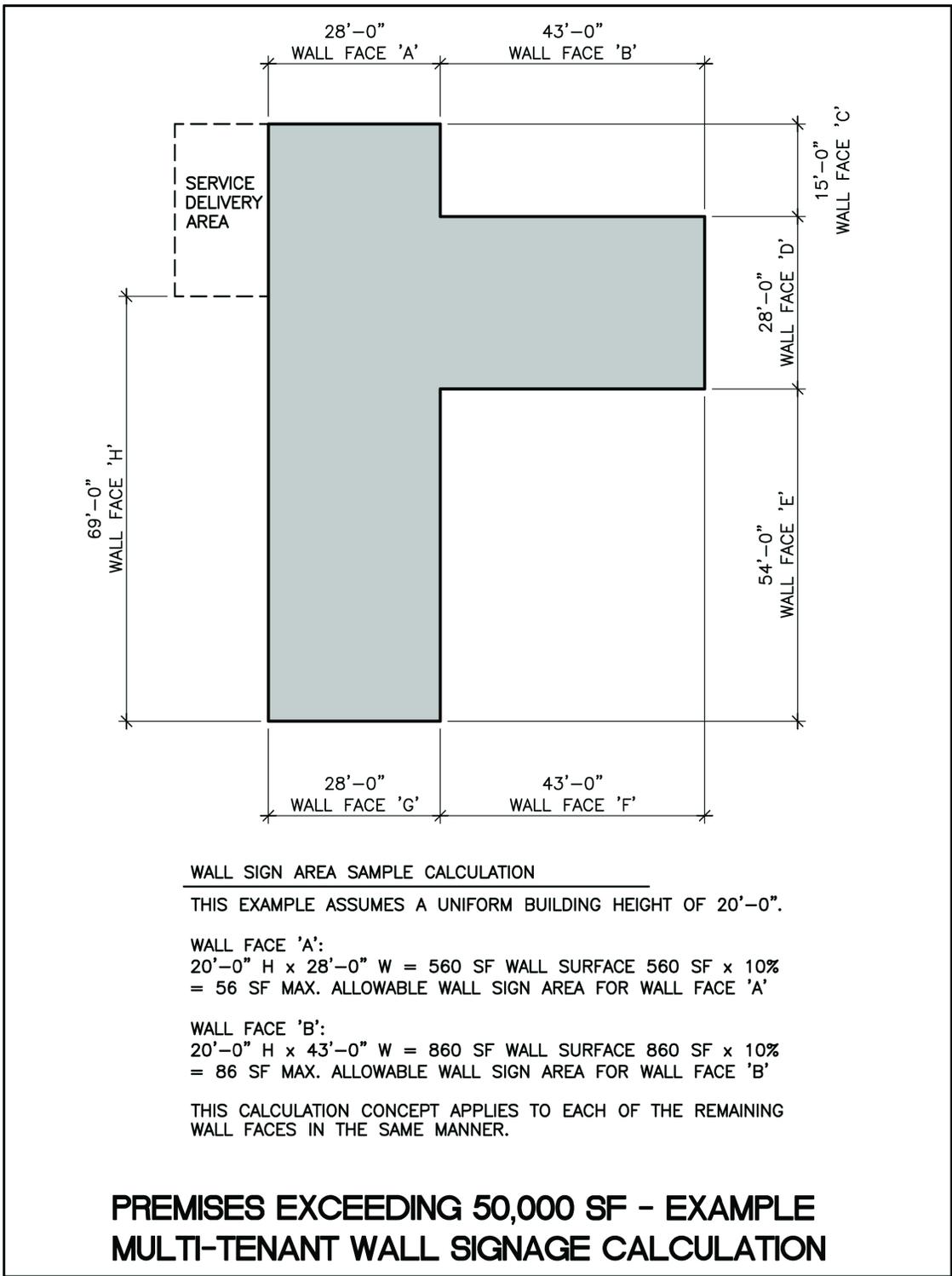


Exhibit 60-13



Article 9 NONCONFORMING SIGNS

Sections:

[17.60.090.010 Nonconforming signs.](#)

[17.060.9.020 Nonconforming billboards.](#)

17.60.090.010 Nonconforming signs.

A. Compliance.

1. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, all signs and supporting structures which do not conform to the provisions of this Code, but were constructed in compliance with previous regulations, shall be regarded as **legal nonconforming, and may remain Nonconforming signs may remain until December 31, 2015**, if such signs are properly repaired and maintained as required by Section 17.60.7.090.
2. ~~The copy face of a sign may be changed or altered in any manner which does not require structural alteration, subject to the permit requirements of this Code, until December 31, 2012. After December 31, 2012, any sign change, including copy change, shall require compliance with the provisions of the Sign Code.~~ **The copy face of a legal nonconforming sign may be changed, replaced or installed in the same cabinet. If a new sign cabinet or structural alteration are required, it is considered a new sign and shall require compliance with the provisions of the Sign Code.**
3. ~~Any sign user may file for an exemption as set forth in subsection B below ("grandfather" exemption), and the provisions of that subsection B shall govern. However, neither this subsection nor subsection B provides any right of continuance after the adoption of the Sign Code of those types of signs specifically prohibited in Section 17.60.2.010, with the exception of roof signs. Grandfather exemptions will not be granted to freestanding signs that overhang or encroach into the public right of way or overhang or encroach upon adjoining property.~~

B. Grandfather exemption. Signs that have been granted a grandfather exemption by the City of Great Falls on or before July 1, 2006, may remain in perpetuity, provided the sign is properly maintained ~~and is not changed in any manner, either structurally or copy changes. Any sign which is so changed shall be brought into immediate compliance with all provisions of this Code. Changes in the name of a tenant on a multi-tenant identification sign may be made without loss of the grandfather exemption.~~ **The copy face of a grandfather sign may be changed, replaced or installed in the same cabinet. If a new sign cabinet or structural alteration are required, it is considered a new sign and shall require compliance with the provisions of the Sign Code.**

C. Change of nonconforming sign. Any nonconforming sign that is structurally altered, relocated (on the same or another lot) or **replacement of the cabinet** ~~replaced~~ shall immediately comply with all provisions of this Code. Any sign that is accidentally damaged or destroyed may be repaired or replaced within sixty (60) days to the sign's original condition subject to the permit requirement of this Code.

D. Administrative authority. ~~The Director of Planning and Community Development is granted authority to perform an administrative review and make appropriate decisions to allow some flexibility in individual nonconforming situations where the strict interpretation and application of the code will be unworkable for the property owner and/or tenants. All decisions must be consistent with the overall~~

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~~goal of bringing nonconforming signage closer to compliance and should be consistently applied to similar circumstances.~~

- E. Removal. The Director of Planning and Community Development **or designee** may order the removal of any sign, or sign structure, that is not in compliance with the provisions of this chapter.
1. Removal is the responsibility of the owner of the sign or the property owner.
 2. Failure of the property owner or sign owner to comply with the removal notice will result in the removal of the sign by the City. Removal costs and administrative fees will be assessed against the property.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

17.060.9.020 Nonconforming billboards.

Billboard signs that do not conform to the provisions of this Code, but were legally constructed and permitted at the time of their installation shall be considered legally nonconforming and allowed to remain subject to the following:

- A. Downsizing required. Nonconforming billboards exceeding height and area limitations specified in this Code must be downsized to meet requirements of area and height specified in this Code ~~by December 31, 2015~~, or be removed by the sign owner or the property owner **if destroyed or damaged beyond fifty (50) percent**. This is not intended to eliminate legally sanctioned side-by-side billboards.
- B. ~~Any nonconforming billboard sign destroyed or damaged beyond fifty (50) percent of its replacement value for any cause whatsoever shall be reconstructed only in compliance with all provisions of this chapter or be removed by the sign owner or property owner.~~
- C. In no case may a billboard be repaired or maintained resulting in substantial upgrading or replacement of the structural support of the billboard that would extend the life of the structure. Substantial upgrading may include, but is not limited to, conversion from wood to steel support structure or a conversion from a multi-pole to a single-pole structure.
- D. A non-illuminated billboard may be illuminated provided it is not non-conforming because of its proximity to a residential area or its location within an entry or scenic corridor pursuant to 17.60.5.020.B.
- E. Any signs on property annexed to the City of Great Falls after the effective date of this chapter are subject to all the provisions of this Code.

(Ord. No. 3056, § 1, 8-17-2010)

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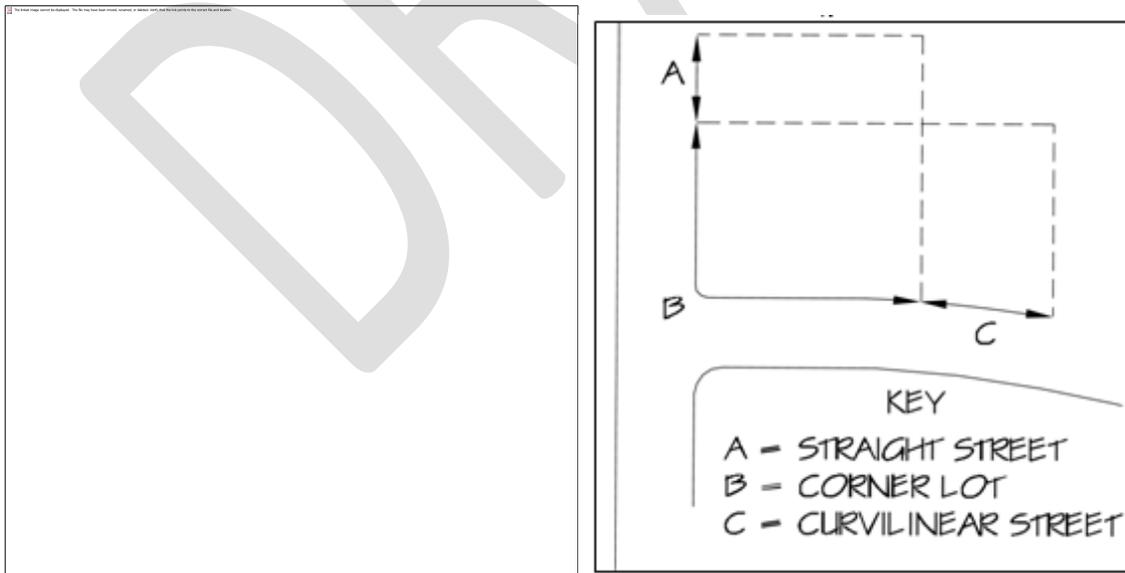
Chapter 60 SIGN CODE

17.8.090 - Measurements.

In this Title, standards have been adopted to control the size, height, and placement of various structures and buildings. The following rules shall be used in measuring these to ensure compliance:

1. Height of telecommunication tower. The height of a telecommunication tower shall be measured from the natural undisturbed ground surface below the center of the base of said tower to the top of the tower itself or, if higher, to the tip of the highest antenna or piece of equipment attached thereto. In the case of building-mounted towers the height of the tower includes the height of the portion of the building on which it is mounted. In the case of "crank-up" or other similar towers whose height can be adjusted, the height of the tower shall be the maximum height to which it is capable of being raised.
2. Sign height. The height of a sign is measured from the ground surface on which it is located to the uppermost part of the sign or its support.
 - a. If sign placement is within one hundred (100) feet of the centerline of the abutting public right-of-way and the said centerline is ten (10) feet or greater above the ground surface on which the sign is located, the sign height will be measure above the centerline of the public right-of-way, measured at right angle of the roadway. The applicant shall provide proof of elevation data from a State licensed land surveyor.
3. Lot area. Lot area is measured on the horizontal plane.
4. Lot depth. Lot depth is measured at a right angle to the front lot line.
5. Lot width. Lot width is measured between side lot lines along the front yard setback line.
6. Lot frontage. On straight or curvilinear streets, lot frontage is measured along the street right-of-way between the side lot lines (Exhibit 8-1).

Exhibit 8-1. Lot Frontage Measurements



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7. Building height. The height of a building shall be measured as the average between the highest point and lowest point of finished ground level adjoining the building at the exterior wall to the highest peak of the highest roof.

(Ord. 2950, 2007)

8. Floor area. The floor area of a building shall be measured from exterior face to exterior face, excluding porches, stoops, steps, and the like.
9. Distance between specified land uses. Specified minimum distances between land uses shall be measured in a straight line from the structure housing the use to the structure housing the other use, unless otherwise specified in this Title.
10. Height of outdoor lights. The height of an outdoor luminaire is the vertical distance from the elevation of the surrounding grade being illuminated to the bottom of the luminaire.
11. Average slope. The average slope of a lot shall be determined using the following formula:

S =	$I * L * 0.0023$
	A

Where:

S = Average slope of lot in percent

I = Contour interval (20 feet or less)

L = Sum of length of all contours on lot in feet

A = Area of the lot in acres

Electronic Message Display: A sign capable of displaying words, symbols, figures or images that can be electronically or mechanically changed by remote or automatic means.

Feather pole banner: A sign with or without characters, letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to cloth, paper, flexible plastic, or fabric of any kind with only such material for backing. Feather flags are generally a single sign attached to a support post and typically having a dimensional ratio of 4 high to 1 wide and less than fifteen (15) height. This definition also applies to Tear Drop Flags, Windfeather Flags, Bow Flags, and other similar type signs.

Lawn signs, yard signs, bandit signs, placards, and road signs, among other names used for advertising, products, businesses, services, and charities, educational, political, ideological, or religious advertisement is prohibited of any kind.

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SIGN FEES ~~EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2014~~

Sign Electrician/Journeymen Certificate (annual).....	\$ 15.00
Sign Erector Certificate (annual).....	\$ 15.00
Sign Electrician Certificate - Class A License.....	\$100.00 \$150.00
Class B License.....	\$ 50.00
Sign Examination Application Fee.....	\$ 50.00
Sign Permit Fees 0 – 24 Sq. Ft.....	\$ 38.78
25 Sq. Ft. or more is \$38.78 plus	\$ 1.62 sq ft
Reface Sign Permit/Inspection: existing permitted sign flat fee.....	\$ 65.90
If no previous permit is found the permitted as new sign	
Neon Lighting – First 100 ft.....	\$ 64.62
100 ft. or more is \$64.62 plus	\$ 0.33/ft
Sign Electrical Inspection Fee	\$ 34.64 \$ 38.78
Bench Signs/ Transit Shelter (annual).....	\$ 77.55
Bench Signs – One Time Design Review Fee.....	\$ 32.31
A-Type Sandwich Board Signs (annual).....	\$ 64.62
On-Premise Temporary Sign – 60 day permit.....	\$ 32.31
Annual permit.....	\$129.24
Montana Expo Park Temp Banner Annual Fee.....	\$646.14
Central Avenue Banner/BNSF Underpasses – 30 Day Maximum.....	\$ 64.62
Pick up fee for Confiscated Signs.....	\$ 64.62
Transit Shelter.....	\$ 77.55

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17.20.6.140 - Casino, type I.

- A. Purpose. This section is intended to allow the location of new casinos or the relocation of existing casinos in certain zoning districts provided they meet more stringent development and appearance standards than type II casinos.

(Ord. 2950, 2007)

- B. Classification. A casino shall be identified by definition in Chapter 8 of this Title.
- C. Proximity to residentially zoned properties. There is no minimum distance requirement from residential uses or between casinos.
- D. Proximity to other specified uses.
1. Casinos shall not locate within six hundred (600) feet of an education facility (K through post-secondary), worship facility, park or playground. The distance shall be measured by direct line, without regard to intervening structures or streets, between closest property boundaries; and,
 2. Casinos shall not locate on premises operating a sexually oriented business.
- E. Design Review Board approval. The Design Review Board shall review and approve the exterior building design and finishes; and landscaping, signage, lighting and parking plan for any new or relocated casino, or an expansion or exterior renovation of an existing casino.

(Ord. 2950, 2007)

- F. Special landscaping. Casinos must comply with all applicable landscaping requirements in Chapter 44 Landscaping. Additional or special landscaping requirements for type I casinos include the following:
1. Minimum square footage of interior landscaping, inclusive of landscaping in vehicular use areas and foundation planting areas, shall be twenty (20) percent of the gross property area to be developed.
 2. Fifty (50) percent of said landscaping shall be located between the front lot line and the building.
- ~~G. Special signage. The following signage requirements shall apply:~~
- ~~1. No freestanding signs shall be allowed.~~
 - ~~2. Wall signs shall not exceed seven and one-half (7.5) percent of the building wall area per frontage.~~
 - ~~3. No exterior or interior signage indicating any form of gaming shall be allowed to face an adjacent residential use.~~

F-G. Signage must meet zoning district requirements for the premises being applied for.