

## Public Comment Summary

As a part of the public meeting and notices that were sent out we received a variety of comments back that are listed below:

1. Deleting the sign code chapter completely and allow the business to install what they believe is in their best interest.
2. Leave the code as is and enforce it to the full extent and eliminate the nonconforming signs.
3. Implement stricter signage regulations to reduce sign clutter.
4. Allow signs to be carried, worn or otherwise supported by person or animals. (17.60.2.010 Prohibited signs and exceptions.)
5. Allow lawn signs without permit in all districts. Allow lawn signs as a temporary or in the same category as Real Estate signs.
6. Allow lighted signs and electronic message display in residential zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-5, R-6, R-9 and R-10) with worship facilities and education facilities meeting the sign criteria requirements of 17.60.4.010.
7. Allow Ground on-premise window signs be allowed to cover 100% when applied on the inside of the glass. (17.60.2.020 Signs exempt from permit.)
8. Enforce the sign code requirements to eliminate all the garage sale signs left up over time and on utility poles.
9. Allow sandwich board signs without permit in all districts and as a home occupation. (Article 3 TEMPORARY SIGNS)
10. Allow projecting signs allowed with freestanding signage.
11. Allow freestanding sign structure be installed without base of the sign being landscaped if irrigation is not readily available and non living landscape features are allowed.
12. 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.
13. Reduce all freestanding signs to eight foot, (8) monument style.
14. Allow all existing signs to be refaced weather they are conforming or nonconforming.
15. Allow owners to install any sign and hire a licensed electrical contractor or a class A sign contractor to wire and make connections
16. Allow Nonconforming signs to remain and be changed with reface and new cabinets and allow if structural alteration are required.
17. Allow a new sign cabinet to be installed as long as no structural alteration are required.
18. Refund the fees paid by the original Grandfather sign permits. (68 @ \$ 75 each or \$5,100.00)

## Charlie Sheets

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**From:** Curt Wike [Curt.Wike@north40.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2015 9:25 AM  
**To:** Charlie Sheets  
**Subject:** Great Falls Sign Code -- public comments

Mr. Sheets,

As a follow up to the last public meeting, and the current draft changes, we had two items for your and the commission's consideration:

1. Section 17.60.3.010 (F) On-premise temporary signs. As drafted, this language only allows one (1) sandwich board sign per premises. Given the purpose and functionality of sandwich board signs, would it be possible to go with language that allows one sandwich board per entrance? A number of businesses, particularly (but not always) larger businesses, have multiple customer entrances. It would be nice for businesses to be able to continue to have messaging capability at each customer entrance.
2. Sections 17.60.4.020 (B) (3)(Commercial and industrial districts) and 17.8.090 (2) (a) (Measurements). Would it be possible to eliminate the 10 foot differential, so that all businesses, regardless of the topography they are located upon, could utilize the 25 foot height from the centerline of the adjacent public right-of-way?

Thank you.

### Curtis L. Wike | Risk & Administration

North 40 Outfitters | 5109 Alaska Trail | Great Falls, MT 59405  
T 406.761.6623 | F 406.205.0133  
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*Please consider the environment. Do you really need to print this email?*

## Charlie Sheets

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**From:** Craig Raymond  
**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2015 8:57 AM  
**To:** Charlie Sheets  
**Subject:** FW: Citizen Request 30611 - Sign Code

I will respond but please print and include with our sign code revision comments.

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**From:** Connie Rosas  
**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2015 8:40 AM  
**To:** Craig Raymond  
**Subject:** FW: Citizen Request 30611 - Sign Code

Hi Craig,

I will let her know I am forwarding this to you.

**Connie Rosas**  
Sr. Administrative Assistant  
City of Great Falls  
Planning and Community Development  
(406) 455-8438  
[crosas@greatfallsmt.net](mailto:crosas@greatfallsmt.net)

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**From:** Web Master  
**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2015 8:24 AM  
**To:** Connie Rosas  
**Subject:** Citizen Request 30611 - Sign Code

A new Citizen Request has been submitted to the Citizen Support Center, and assigned to you for prompt response. Please use the online Citizen Support Center to respond to this Citizen Request. As a reminder, your response will be included in the online tracking system for this Citizen Request. Thank you.

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Original Request</b>  |  |
| <b>SummaryDate:</b>      | <b>12/21/2015</b>  |
| <b>Reference Number:</b> | <b>30611</b>   |
| <b>Status:</b>           | <b>Assigned</b>  |
| <b>Name:</b>             | <b>Jenny Yoneji</b>  |
| <b>Email:</b>            | <a href="mailto:jyoneji@gmail.com">jyoneji@gmail.com</a>                 |
| <b>Phone:</b>            | <b>453-8016</b>  |
| <b>Source:</b>           | <b>online</b>  |
| <b>Assigned To:</b>      | <b>crosas</b>  |
| <b>Assigned Group:</b>   | <b>Planning and Community Development</b>                                |
| <b>Topic</b>             | <a href="#"><u>Sign Code</u></a>   |
| <b>Comment:</b>          | Please respond to Ms. Yoneji regarding sign code enforcement. Thank you. |

Request Details: Could you please tell me why the sign code hasn't been enforced? I was a member of the sign code committee that produced the current code. I was under the impression that it was being enforced. What was the point of all the work we did to produce that current code when it wasn't even enforced? We worked so hard to produce a code that would level the playing field so that businesses wouldn't be trying to outdo one another in sign size, flashiness, etc. so that they could funnel their funds into growing their businesses instead of creating huge signs. We tried very hard to accommodate the interests of the business community and the interests of those with community beautification concerns. Great Falls is a better-looking community now than it was ten years ago. However, it still has work to do. Signage is a huge factor in the appearance of a community - signage and landscaping. We tried to consider both. As people engaged in city business, you probably know how frustrating it is to work on a project, give it hours and hours of your time, think you've reached a viable and well-thought-out conclusion and then find that it was all for naught. I'm so disappointed in the city. If the code had been enforced, we wouldn't be facing this situation. There is always tweaking to be done with regard to legislation, etc., but failure to enforce a code is a real failure on the part of my elected officials.



12-5-15

217 Riverview Ln  
Great Falls 59404

Craig Raymond, City Planning Director  
City of Great Falls

Dear Sir,

I am amazed that the City of Great Falls does not have an ordinance or code that requires businesses that close to take down & remove their signs within a reasonable amount of time. Great Falls is an eyesore full of signs advertising businesses that are no longer occupying the spaces. Makes us look very junky and less than prosperous.

Your staff is working on proposed changes to sign code, so why not include a code for this type of "out-of-business" sign?

Sincerely, A Taxpayer  
and Home Owner,

Katharine Kalafat

Katharine Kalafat



Title 17 - LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

Chapter 60 SIGN CODE

STEVE  
✓

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. *parade ? 17.60.4.10.B*
  3. Height limit is six (6) feet above finished grade. *YES ALLOWED TO PUT ON BOTH SIDES*
  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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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.
  - a. 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.

CENTRAL BUSINESS CORP  
17.60.4.030  
WHY  
NOT  
2



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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-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.

*Downside is Two Permits  
for SAME Sign*

*ALLOWING OWNER TO  
ANCHOR & BUILD  
BUT WOULD  
HIRE CONTRACTOR  
TO WIRE &  
HOOK UP*

## Title 17 - LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

### Chapter 60 SIGN CODE

#### 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

leave  
in  
WANTS TO  
REPLACE  
CABINETS



## Signage

I hope that you maintain and implement strict signage regulations. Have you heard about employers trying to entice prospective professionals to Great Falls that attempt navigating their route through the town when showing them around without driving 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue? I've listened to numerous stories about such attempts. Some of us are embarrassed by 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It could and should be a more attractive road.

Recently I was in Missoula and went to Costco. I'd been there before, but a while ago. I had trouble finding it on Reserve. The landscaping has matured creating a barrier from the road, the building is set back quite a ways and the signage is subtle. That is true of other more recent developments along their "10<sup>th</sup> Avenue". Why can't we do that too? No. We let new structures go up close to the road and allow horrid, aggressive, big signs.

I love Great Falls. I've lived most of my life here, but I also value beauty. I wonder who really benefits from weaker signage restrictions. I wonder if it is the casino industry. It is one way we could make our town more attractive and move it in a better future direction. I wish I could come to the meeting tonight. I had a prior commitment, or I would come and publicly state my concern.

Thank you for your time.

Rebecca Scott

Becca.scott@charter.net

## Charlie Sheets

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**From:** Randall Knowles [knowlesmontana@juno.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2015 11:34 AM  
**To:** Charlie Sheets  
**Subject:** Knowles Public Comment - Sign Codes

We do not live in a communist state or nation. What makes the United States the GREATEST country in the World is FREEDOM. It is not the job of government to dictate beauty or logic. Great Falls can be the "prettiest" land in the world. Great Falls is only a community if we have businesses. Without businesses we are just a pretty tourist attraction. Businesses must advertise. As a SCORE volunteer for the past 25 years. 25 years ago one of the greatest errors conducted by small businesses and an error conducted today is lack of or inadequate advertising. If Great Falls wants to support the success of their business community then government needs to act like a partner and not a dictator. Government has much more to worry about than how big a sign is. Every time government changes the rules, government makes some commercial real estate more valuable and some less valuable. Changes in advertising opportunities can affect the value of 100's of commercial lots, several voting precincts, and entire sections of the community. Let the business development organizations make recommendations regarding signage; if indeed signage is a problem. Undersized signs on 10<sup>th</sup> avenue south can reduce commercial property values to the level of central avenue. There have been thousands of hours dedicated to the scientific study of optimum signage size. Selecting the properly sized sign is not a willy nilly decision. There is such a critter as sign that is Tooooo large.

In all of the economic studies that I read, regarding the most popular cities in which to establish a business, I have NEVER read that the "no sign" community has an advantage. There are hundreds of studies about the communities that discourage entrepreneurship through micro regulation. AND, I do not want to hear; "Billings, Missoula, Bozeman, Helena, and Butte," have sign codes. Great Falls is not these other cities.

The city of Great Falls will retard, delay, inhibit, and discourage economic development by meddling with signs. Great Falls cannot afford to adopt initiatives that slow down or create road blocks to economic development. Creating a successful business is hard enough without unnecessary government interference. Nationally only 17% of new businesses survive more than 5 years.

Randall Knowles

**PS** Is there compensation to the business that complies with any silly sign codes that may be initiated - when government obstructs the view of that sign? Does government pay for relocation? Does government bend the rules so the business can re-size the sign? Does government buy the business? The more government meddles in the life of a business the greater their responsibility to guarantee some level of success. Remember the days when government issued business permits and the troubles that code created for government.

"I have always been delighted at the prospect of a new day, a fresh try, one more start, with perhaps a bit of magic waiting somewhere behind the morning." John Boynton Priestley (Toastmasters come join us for a bit of magic!)

**NEW Email** - Reply to: [Knowlesmontana@Juno.com](mailto:Knowlesmontana@Juno.com) - Randall Gene Knowles,  
3017 Ninth Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405 voice, cell, & text 406-799-1547





Prior to my comments/suggestions on the sign code, I would like to explain what I predominately do each day. As Kelly's Signs does not do the large electrical signs as all the other companies, we cater to small business clientele, and smaller signs/vehicles/banners for all the larger corporations, contractors and rental agencies. I am not exaggerating when I tell you, most of my customers are very frustrated with the current sign situation. (As I'm sure you guys are aware). But I'm in a unique position that I can sit and discuss, in a friendly atmosphere, and feel out what their wants for their business, and their frustrations. Many of the small businesses I deal with, only have minimal employees, and don't have time to run down to the city. Small business really have to fight day to day to attract a customer base. And when they are constantly dinged with permit fees and limitations, they will tend to find ways to get what they need in an attempt to survive. They make home-made signs, order signs online, and as I explain the rules, they frequently comment either "they don't care", or "better to ask forgiveness, then permission." This atmosphere is setting up a tough situation; I'm not selling a sign, they are not following city guidelines, and putting up unattractive and possibly unsafe signs. The other option, is that then they just leave up their current signs which in many cases are outdated and not as attractive as a new one would be.

So, most of my suggestions start with this information. (I've been doing this almost 20 years, and our family has had businesses in Great Falls since the 1800's.) My father was the City Engineer in the 70's, and my brother was maintenance chief for the DOT for 30 years. Both of whom are currently working at our sign shop, so we know about dealing with people in a government setting. As a community we really need to help our small businesses thrive, & stop with the revolving door of failure. If we gave some more freedoms as opposed to regulations, more individuals would be willing to work together to accomplish community goals. Believe me, I know you will never make the few squeaky wheels happy, there are some that will complain about anything. So let's stop just trying to appease them, and help the business succeed to create a more vibrant community. Most of the business people I deal with everyday are reasonable, hard working people, that are just frustrated.

I would be more than willing to volunteer if you are putting together a committee or need any further information. The economic base of Great Falls needs to be bolstered by successful, active businesses. We really need to stop scaring away options due to over regulation and limits of advertisement. There are many of the guidelines that are appropriate, and needed. And there are a lot of sign code that is perfectly reasonable. But for a young person, thinking of starting up a small business, they are astonished by what is required to just put up a wall sign or a banner. In general, I would recommend that each new business be allowed a sign, (within parameters) (1) banner for advertising and allowed limited bandit signs. No fee for the one banner and bandit signs. Variances could be placed for square footage.

As requested, I went through the sign code and made suggestions. Thanks again for your time.

Chris Kelly  
Vice President

Raymond Kelly  
President

Dave Kelly  
Secretary

Kelly's Signs & Design  
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Great Falls, MT  
(406) 761-8710  
esigns@bresnan.net

Page 1 - 17.60.1.020 Intent & Purpose

A. "Promote a positive economic and business climate through distinctive and effective signage."

B. "Improve Great Falls' community image by eliminating sign clutter."

**Comment:** These two lines are the primary battlefield. Eliminate line B - too vague and up to interpretation.

Page 2 - 17.60.2.010 Prohibited Signs & Exceptions

F. "Signs advertising a product, service or business that are carried, worn or otherwise supported."

**Comment:** Eliminate - How much of a problem could this be? Plus it is a fairly common occurrence around town right now?

Page 3 - 17.60.2.010 Prohibited Signs & Exceptions

I. "Lawn signs advertising a product, service or business"

**Comment:** Limit, but allow. perhaps 1 per property with limited size.

Page 3 - 17.60.2.010 Prohibited Signs & Exceptions

F. "On-Premise ground level window signs."

**Comment:** eliminate the 1/3 distinction and 1/4 distinction. With many of the new window films, there are a more and more options for attractive window use, along with assisting with sun, glare, security or temperature regulation. These are usually a cost effective way for a small company to advertise when they can't afford a large sign.

Page 4 - 17.60.2.010 Prohibited Signs & Exceptions

I. "Non-illuminated temporary signs for events."

**Comment:** allow 14 days prior to the event.

Page 4 - 17.60.2.010 Prohibited Signs & Exceptions

K. "Home occupation signs"

**Comment:** Make the allowable sign larger 1 square foot is too small.

Page 4 - 17.60.3.010 On-premise temporary signs

**Comment:** Eliminate the permit fee for at least 1 temporary sign. When I tell a customer they must have a permit, again, I do not get to sell the product, they purchase online, and put up anyway. They are also likely buying a cheap version that cannot tolerate our weather. At least allow each business (1) temporary sign without fee that allows them to advertise. As always, staying within your guidelines.

Page 5 - 17.60.3.010 On-premise temporary signs

C. "Temporary signs may not be displayed in place of permanent signage."

**Comment:** You know the statistics - most businesses do not make money their first year, at least. Give a new owner a chance to succeed. Many banners are beautiful, and can be used effectively if mounted well.

Page 4 - 17.60.3.010 On-premise temporary signs

F. "Sandwich board signs."

**Comment:** Eliminate the permit fee for at least 1 temporary sign. The section on line 4 that states a sign in poor maintenance or safety issues needs to be removed is appropriate.



Page 7 - 17.60.4.010 Residential, neighborhoods commercial and central business periphery dist.

C. 2 Projecting signs and wall signs advertising the same business may not occupy the same building frontage.

**Comment:**

Eliminate: Many business need to attract customers from differing angles, but they still need to maintain the square footage limits.

Page 10 - 17.60.4.010 Commercial and industrial districts.

B. 1.

**Comment:** Eliminate (1) freestanding sign per premise street frontage and No more that (2) signs allowed.

B. 3.

**Comment:** Grandfather in all pre-existing signs. Allow them to update and change as needed. Any new sign/business construction will then fall under the new height limit.

C. - Not sure why you're eliminating this option?

Page 12 - 17.60.4.030 Central business core district

C 2.. "Projecting signs and wall signs advertising the same business may not occupy the same building frontage."

**Comment:** Eliminate. Many of the business downtown would like to attract foot and drive by traffic.

In your edited copy, I see you suggest eliminating the section on 17.60.4.020 section C and 17.60.4.030 section D. I agree -



**The Home Builders Association of Great Falls**

327 2nd Street South

Great Falls, MT. 59405

Phone: 406-452-4663

Fax: 406-453-0271

Email: [hbagf@bresnan.net](mailto:hbagf@bresnan.net)

**2015 Executive Committee:**

Clint Larsen - President

Les Bruner - 1st Vice President

Matt Graff - 2nd Vice President

Jody Bastas - Treasurer

Mike Green - Past President

Katie Hanning, Executive Officer

December 15, 2015

City Commission and Planning Staff,

Each year the Home Builders Association of Great Falls produces the Parade of Home Event. This is a self guided tour of local area homes. Over the years we have found it necessary to set out directional sign. This allow those who are not smart phone savvy to find their way to the homes. The signs we use are bright yellow on wire frames. As the sign code exists now we would not be allowed to use these signs.

**2015 Board of Directors**

**Builders:**

Scot Davis

Matt Graff

Russ Martello

Byron Roberts

Spencer Woith

Jim Zarling

The Home Builders would like to have an option for a 3 day permit to use theses types of signs. A simple \$50.00 permit fee could be charged. This will cover costs of a city employee to take down the abandoned signs, if necessary. This permit will also give the city the information it needs to contact the permit holder and either remind them to remove the signs or inform them that their signs have been removed and put in the trash.

Sincerely,

Katie Hanning, EO  
Home Builders Association of Great Falls

**Associates:**

Jody Bastas

Les Bruner

Stevi Phillips

John Schut

Jeff Tuttle

Jason Westmoreland

**Life Directors:**

Russ Eklund

John Harding

Steve Keaster

Basil Jacobson

Byron Roberts

**MBIA Representative:**

Toby Malsam

**NAHB Representative:**

Spencer Woith



17.60.2.010.1



## Charlie Sheets

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**From:** Big O Tires Great Falls, MT [bigotires26702@bresnan.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2015 10:36 AM  
**To:** Charlie Sheets  
**Subject:** SIGN CODE  
**Attachments:** SIGN CODE SUGGESTIONS.docx

Thank you,

J. Mark Rothwell  
Big O Tires Great Falls, MT  
406.454.3406

# SIGN CODE SUGGESTIONS

1. Section 17.60.3.010 says  
"..one temporary sign with up to 64 square feet... An annual permit for one temporary sign per premise..."

Charlie said at the meeting that it was not limited to 1 sign just 64 sq ft--if this is correct it needs to be changed in the code.

2. section 17.60.4.015 - C1
  - \*so only 1 pole sign **OR** 1 monument sign **OR** 1 low profile sign?
  - \*should there be a minimum? Multi tenant building?
  - \*require landscaping required-75 % living-if there is no water to area then it just dies and looks bad
3. section 17.60.4.020 - C2
  - \* so only 1 pole sign **OR** 1 monument sign **OR** 1 low profile sign? unless 250 ft separation?
6. explain -min 6 feet curbed island or protective barrier
  - require landscaping required-75 % living-if there is no water to area then it just dies and looks bad

4. section 17.60.090.010

- A-2. ".....if a new sign cabinet or structural alteration are required, it is considered a new sign and shall require compliance..."

Allow replacement of cabinet

- B. same as above - allow replacement of cabinet

Then - was there not a fee to get grandfathered in?-the fee should be refunded.

- C. same as above allow - replacement of cabinet

Thank you,

J. Mark Rothwell, President  
Big O Tires  
406.454.3406



## Charlie Sheets

---

**From:** Kellys Signs [montana1914@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 07, 2015 11:20 AM  
**To:** Charlie Sheets  
**Subject:** Question

Good morning Charlie,

We had another question re: The section on Pole banners and lawn signs. If I'm reading this correctly, any and all signs that people place on their yards or businesses; decorative or advertising, would be prohibited? So this would greatly impact advertising available for small business that place a sign at jobs they are currently active, or special event signage for business, which would be a concern.

It is not necessarily that we sell a load of these, many people purchase these online or from box stores. How could this be enforced, especially as most small groups or individuals are not even aware there is this in a sign code? Would this also include holiday decorations or decorative flagging many stores use to advertise an event, or a "Now Renting", or "Garage Sale"? We're concerned that these paragraphs could be interpreted a number of different ways that could in theory limit almost all flags, banners and signs other than Realtor and day cares? There is a potential that this could create endless problems. Those of us that adhere to the regulations could be impacted fairly substantially, as we would turn down these clients, to just have them go online, and take the money out of Great Falls.

Let me know what you think.

Thanks - Chris Kelly

--

Kelly's Signs  
2315 12th Ave S  
Great Falls, MT  
(406) 761-8710  
[kellysignsmt.com](http://kellysignsmt.com)  
KellysSigns.net

12/9

| NAME             | COMPANY            | EMAIL                      |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| PAN DUST         | BIG SKY SIGN       | BSSS. @ USA. com           |
| Bob SNIDER       | Catgraphics        | Catgraphics1@3Rivers.com   |
| Dennis Goss      | Dennis Goss        |                            |
| JOHN GASS        | RETIRED            | gassjohnw6@yahoo.com       |
| Katie Hanning    | Home Builders      | info@hbqgf.org             |
| Reese Rippe      | Flippin Family Fun | flippinfamilyfun@gmail.com |
| J. MARK ROTHWELL | BIG OTIRE          | BIGOTIRES26702@BRESNAN.NET |

*Handwritten signature: Fred McCall*

|                   |                               |                            |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| John Galloway     | DQ                            |                            |
| Steven E Galloway | DQ                            | segdreams@yahoo.com        |
| Jeff Farrington   | Lamar Outdoor                 | jfarrington@lamar.com      |
| Bob England       | REMAX                         | Bob@HomeBOB.COM            |
| Krista Macek      | Macek Co., Inc.               | krista@macekco.com         |
| Beth Duke         | Coldwell Banker               | beth@thefallsmt.com        |
| Terry Thompson    | Great Falls Assoc of Realtors | terry@gtfar.com            |
| Krista Smith      | GF Builders Exchange          | Krista@greatfallsplaza.com |



12/17

| NAME               | Company                     | EMAIL                          |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ✓ Tom Gossack      | Redeemer Lutheran Church    | tgossack@mcclure.com           |
| ✓ Debra Oldfield   | Redeemer Lutheran Church    | newlot.de@gmail.com            |
| ✓ Scott Shull      | Days Inn                    | scott@daysinn-greatfalls.com   |
| ✓ John Olin        | Cat Graphics                | catgraphics2@3rivers.net       |
| ✓ Jenn Powell      | TRIBUNE                     | jpowell@greatfalls-tribune.com |
| ✓ Kendra Owen      | City Lights Owen Properties | kendra.c.owen@gmail.com        |
| ✓ ARNIE OWEN       | OWEN PROPERTIES             | aowen1954@gmail.com            |
| ✓ Curt Wike        | North 40 Outfitters         | curt.wike@north40.com          |
| ✓ Allison Smith    | Catalyst Commercial         | allison@catalyst-cre.com       |
| Fred Burow         | city                        |                                |
| Steven E. Galloway | Dairy Queen                 | segdreams@yahoo.com            |
| Lola               | Dairy Queen                 |                                |
| Bob Abbott         | Cat Graphics                | catgraphics2@3rivers.net       |
| MARK ROTHWELL      | BIGOTIRES                   | BIGOTIRES26702@BRESNAN.NET     |
| TYLER HAFNER       | R&R                         | r-r@BRESNAN.NET                |
| Charlie Mosler     | Hide Out                    | #hideoutlounge@yahoo.com       |