



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Chairman Rodriguez and Planning Commission Members  
**FROM:** Marne E. Sherman, Development Administrator  
**RE:** Proposed Amendments to Sign Regulations  
**DATE:** June 12, 2020 (for the June 17, 2020 Meeting)

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**ISSUE**

Shall the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) be amended to:

- Update sign regulations to allow for additional building signage for multi-story buildings of three or more stories?
- Increase the proportion of signage permitted per building side in the Commercial, Industrial, and Planned Development Districts?
- Differentiate building signage standards for non-residential and mixed-use buildings vs. residential buildings in the Commercial and Planned Development Districts?
- Update the freestanding sign standards in all Planned Development Districts?

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval of the draft ordinance to City Council.

**ACTION DEADLINE – PLANNING COMMISSION**

Virginia Code § 15.2-2285(B) states:

*“No zoning ordinance shall be amended ... unless the governing body has referred the proposed amendment ... to the local planning commission for its recommendations. Failure of the commission to report 100 days after the first meeting of the commission after the proposed amendment ... has been referred to the commission, ..., shall be deemed approval, ....”*

The City Council referred this amendment to the Commission on May 12, 2020. The next Planning Commission meeting was May 27, 2020. One hundred days after that date is September 4, 2020. If the Commission wishes to take action, it would need to do so by its August 26, 2020 meeting.

**CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING – JUNE 10, 2020**

On June 10, 2020, the City Council and the Planning Commission held a joint public hearing to discuss the proposed text amendments. One local business owner offered written comments endorsing the amendments and encouraging the Planning Commission and City Council to take action to approve the draft ordinance. The public can continue to offer written comments until the Planning Commission meeting on June 17 and the City Council meeting on June 24. Any additional comments received will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council and read into the record at the meetings.

**PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION – MAY 27, 2020**

On May 27, 2020, the Planning Commission held a work session to discuss the proposed text amendments. The Commissioners requested that staff consider the appropriateness of allowing one freestanding sign for parcels along Interstate-95 within the Planned Development-Medical Campus (PD-MC) district in anticipated of the future Veterans Affairs (VA) clinic.

Staff consulted with VA development representatives, who stated that their intent is to use building mounted signage along Interstate-95 and that no interstate directed freestanding sign is needed or has been identified in the VA site selection criteria. Therefore, no changes to the draft ordinance were made.

## **BACKGROUND**

### *General Building Mounted Signage*

In 2019, business community stakeholders requested consideration of changes to the sign ordinance to allow for an increase in the proportion of building signage permitted per building side and additional amount of signage for buildings with multiple floors in all Commercial and Planned Development-Commercial, PD-C Districts. Specifically, owners of multi-tenant buildings and multi-story buildings in Downtown, Central Park, and Celebrate Virginia noted that the code limits their ability to provide adequate advertising space to meet their tenants' needs.

Currently §72-59.6 permits one and a half square feet of building mounted signage per one linear foot of building frontage (the one primary front of a building) in the Commercial and Industrial Districts and one square foot of signage per one linear foot of the entire building perimeter in the Planned Development-Commercial District, regardless of the number of floors in a building. The code limits building mounted signage to a maximum of 200 square feet on any one building side in all Commercial, Industrial, and Planned-Development Districts, regardless of the length of the building.

Changes to increase building signage are recommended and should be relatively consistent in these districts to assist with clarity for all users of the code (staff, the public, and sign companies alike). The draft ordinance proposes:

- Increasing the maximum proportion of building signage permitted on any one building side to 250 square feet or 25 percent of the total building signage allowed, whichever is greater.
- Permitting an additional 0.25 square feet of signage per linear foot of frontage/building perimeter for multi-story buildings of three or more stories.

The changes would make the maximum permitted sign area on any one side of the building more proportionate to the overall scale of the building, crediting longer and taller buildings with more sign area per side.

### *Residential Building Mounted Signage*

As residential projects are being developed in Commercial and Planned Development-Commercial Districts (Valley Run Subdivision and Silver Collection Apartments as examples), it is appropriate to update the code to maintain building signage in residential developments at a residential scale. The proposed change would limit residential buildings to 0.5 square feet of signage per linear foot of building frontage, up to 50 total square feet maximum in Commercial Districts and 0.3 square feet of signage per linear foot of building perimeter, up to 50 square feet maximum in Planned Development Districts, consistent with the current regulations for building signage in Residential and Planned Development-Residential Districts.

### *Freestanding Signage*

In anticipation of the proposed Veterans Affairs Clinic (an institutional use) in PD-MC and the current Fredericksburg Park neighborhood development in Planned Development-Mixed Use, PD-MU, changes to the code would permit overall "development signage" and address the oversight currently in the code, which precludes signage for institutional and residential uses. The proposed regulations are based on the current

PD-C sign regulations and tailored to the scale of development in the PD-MC and PD-MU districts. Amendments for freestanding signs in PD-MC and PD-MU include:

- “Development Signage.” In districts of at least 20 acres, allowing a freestanding sign at a major entrance on a public street right-of-way greater than 70 feet in width. The sign shall not exceed 30 feet in height. The sign shall not exceed 200 square feet. Up to 100 square feet of the total sign area can be used as off-premises signs for uses within the district.
- “Development Signage.” In districts of at least 20 acres, allowing a freestanding sign at each existing major intersection at the boundary of the district, not to exceed 15 feet in height and 100 square feet in sign area.
- Institutional and Residential Uses. Signage on individual parcels would be updated to be consistent with the PD-C standards – generally one sign per parcel, 10 feet in height and 100 square feet in size for single-user signs and 150 square feet in size for multi-user signs.

General “development signage” regulation updates in the PD-C District are recommended to:

- Preclude large scale signage in smaller PD-C districts (less than 150 acres).
- Reduce the tallest permitted sign from 175 feet in height to 150 feet in height. For perspective, the existing Central Park sign along I-95 is 138 feet in height. New signs should be limited to a similar height.
- Define major entrances as public streets with right-of-ways that are greater than 70 feet in width.
- Allow for all styles of freestanding signs, not only monument signs.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Through March and April, staff reached out to three sign companies and four private landowners for comment on the proposed ordinance amendments. One company and one landowner endorsed the amendments, one sign company offered editorial changes, which were incorporated, and the remaining stakeholders offered no comment.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Draft Ordinance (Text Amendments)  
City Council Resolution 20-34



**MOTION:**

**DRAFT**  
**[Date]**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Ordinance No. 20-\_\_**

**SECOND:**

**RE: Amending the Unified Development Ordinance §72-59 Signage, to Update Building Signage Standards in Commercial, Industrial, and Planned Development Districts and Update the Freestanding Sign Standards in Planned Development Districts.**

**ACTION: APPROVED: Ayes: 0; Nays: 0**

**FIRST READ: \_\_\_\_\_ SECOND READ: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Sec. I Introduction.**

The purpose of these amendments is to update the Unified Development Ordinance sign regulations for Commercial, Industrial, and Planned Development Districts. Over the last 12 to 18 months, staff conducted independent research and gathered input from the business community to develop updated standards to reflect the current state of neighborhood development in these districts.

The amendments will increase the amount of building mounted signage allowed per side and for buildings with multiple floors in the Commercial, Industrial, and Planned Development Districts and provide a standard for building mounted signage on residential buildings in the Commercial and Planned Development Districts. The update will also revise the freestanding sign standards in all Planned Development Districts to provide for freestanding “development signage” and for institutional and residential uses in these districts, as these uses are beginning to increase in number. Finally, the changes will also update the freestanding sign regulations in the Planned Development – Commercial District to preclude large scale signage in smaller PD-C districts, reduce maximum sign height, define major entrances, and allow styles other than monument signs.

The City Council adopted a resolution to initiate this text amendment at its meeting on \_\_\_\_\_. The Planning Commission held its public hearing on the amendment on \_\_\_\_\_, after which it voted to recommend the amendment to the City Council. The City Council held its public hearing on this amendment on \_\_\_\_\_.

In initiating these amendments, the City Council has considered the factors listed in Code of Virginia § 15.2-2284. The City Council has determined that public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice favor the amendments.

**Sec. II. City Code amendment.**

Article 72-5, Development Standards, Section 72-59, Signage, of the Fredericksburg City Code, is hereby amended as follows:

Section 72-59.6, Sign regulations by type of sign: building-mounted and freestanding, subsection A (1) is hereby amended to delete the language shown in strikethrough and add the underlined language as follows:

**72-59.6 Sign regulations by type of sign: building-mounted and freestanding.**

A. Residential, Planned Development-Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Districts.

(1) Building-mounted signs are permitted as follows:

<b>Building-Mounted Signs</b>			
<b>Zoning District</b>	<b><del>Residential and planned development-residential</del> <u>Planned Development - Residential</u></b>	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>Industrial</b>
<b>Maximum area</b>	0.5 square feet of <u>signage</u> per linear foot of building front (up to 50 square feet)	<p><b><u>Non-residential and Mixed-use Buildings:</u></b></p> <p>1.5 square feet of <u>signage</u> per linear foot of building front (up to <del>200</del> <u>250</u> square feet <u>or 25% of the total building mounted signage allowed, whichever is greater, per building side)</u></p> <p><u>and</u></p> <p><u>Additional 0.25 square feet of signage per linear foot of building front for buildings with three or more stories</u></p> <p><b><u>Residential Buildings:</u></b></p> <p>0.5 square feet of <u>signage</u> per linear foot of building front (up to 50 square feet)</p>	1.5 square feet of <u>signage</u> per linear foot of building front (up to <del>200</del> <u>250</u> square feet <u>or 25% of the total building signage allowed, whichever is greater, per building side)</u>

<b>Building-Mounted Signs</b>			
<b>Zoning District</b>	<b><del>Residential and planned development-residential</del> <u>Planned Development - Residential</u></b>	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>Industrial</b>
<b>Illumination</b>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Maximum projection</b>	42 inches from wall	42 inches from wall	42 inches from wall
<b>Minimum clearance if projecting more than 6 inches</b>	8 feet above pedestrian travel way, 15 feet above vehicle travel path		
<b>Other</b>	Only permitted for nonresidential uses permitted as a principal use.	Each building containing a commercial use in C-D may have additional building-mounted signage advertising off-premises nonresidential uses, of up to 4 square feet per off-premises use and up to 16 square feet total.	Three or more businesses that are not adjacent to an arterial or collector road may jointly erect 1 freestanding sign off-site, which shall not exceed 10 feet in height and 100 square feet in area. The sign shall be located within 1,000 feet of the businesses being advertised and be on property zoned I-1 or I-2.

Section 72-59.6, Sign regulations by type of sign: building-mounted and freestanding, subsection B, Planned Development Districts, is hereby amended to delete the language shown in strikethrough and add the underlined language as follows:

- B. Planned Development Districts. A signage design package is required for all signs in PD-C, PD-MU, PD-MC Districts that will have multiple land uses or multiple development phases.
  - (1) The Zoning Administrator may approve minor amendments to a signage design package. The Zoning Administrator has the sole discretion to determine whether an amendment to a package is minor.
  - (2) Signage design package review process.

- (a) The applicant shall submit a signage design package for approval by the Zoning Administrator with either the final site design for the first phase of development or before construction of the first phase of lot or site development.
- (b) The Zoning Administrator shall review the proposed signage design package within 60 days. The package may be returned to the applicant for changes or modifications. A changed or modified package that addresses departmental comments and is resubmitted shall be approved or denied within 45 days. The applicant may file an appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision to the BZA.
- (3) A signage design package:
  - (a) Shall contain only signs with consistent colors and fonts (excepting business logos), lighting, and construction materials.
  - (b) May contain any types of signs that the Zoning Administrator deems to be consistent with the overall planned development district.
  - (c) Specify the types of materials proposed for construction or use on the project's various signs. Sign poles, supports, panels, attachments, lettering and visible base materials must be identified. Individual purchasers or lessees of project property may select sign materials for their individual signs where the package so allows.
- (4) Upon approval of the signage design package by the Zoning Administrator, all new signs within the boundaries of the PD-C, PD-MU, or PD-MC project shall adhere to the standards of the approved signage design package.
- (5) All signage design packages shall be in conformance with all sign permit requirements of § 72-59.
- (6) In addition to the general signage design package regulations, the regulations in this section apply to signs in all PD-C districts.
  - (a) In PD-C districts of at least 150 acres, PD-C development projects will be permitted the following signs:
    - [1] A freestanding sign not to exceed 1,000 square feet in sign panel area or ~~175~~ 150 feet in height, which may be illuminated.
    - [2] A ~~monument~~ freestanding sign at a major entrance ~~52 feet in width~~ adjacent to a public street right-of-way greater than 70 feet in width. The sign shall not exceed 60 feet in height

(excluding architectural treatments). The sign shall not exceed 200 square feet, except that up to 30 users in the development may each have up to 130 additional square feet of space on the ~~monument~~ freestanding sign as an off-premises sign.

[3] A ~~monument~~ freestanding sign at each existing major intersection at the boundary of the ~~parcel~~ district, not to exceed 15 feet in height and 250 square feet in sign area.

(b) Individual parcels within a PD-C may be permitted:

[1] ~~Building-mounted signage. signs of up to one square foot for each linear foot of building perimeter, up to 200 square feet of signage per building side.~~

<b><u>Non-residential and Mixed-use Buildings</u></b>	<b><u>Residential Buildings</u></b>
<p><u>Building-mounted signage of up to one square foot for each linear foot of building perimeter (up to 250 square feet of total building-mounted signage or 25% of the total building-mounted signage allowed, whichever is greater, per building side)</u></p> <p><u>and</u></p> <p><u>Additional 0.25 square feet of building-mounted signage per linear foot of building front for buildings with three or more stories.</u></p>	<p><u>Building-mounted signage of up to 0.3 square feet per linear foot of building perimeter (up to 50 square feet of total building-mounted signage per building side)</u></p>

[2] A ~~monument~~ freestanding sign up to 10 feet high and 100 square feet in area. A ~~monument~~ freestanding sign identifying more than one user may be up to 150 square feet in area.

[3] An off-premises ~~monument~~ freestanding sign up to 10 feet high and 100 square feet in area if the subject of the sign is on a site or lot of at least 100,000 square feet that does not abut a four-lane major thoroughfare, and the sign is located within 300 feet of the subject.

[4] Two signs are permitted for each stacking lane of an accessory drive-through use. The signs shall not be included in calculating the number of freestanding signs or in calculating the total aggregate sign area. One sign is limited to six feet in height and 30 square feet in area. One sign is limited to six feet in height and 15 square feet in area. Signs shall be installed within 10 feet of the drive-through lane.

(7) In addition to the general signage design package regulations, the regulations in this section apply to signs in all PD-MU and PD-MC districts.

(a) ~~Commercial, industrial, or retail properties housing one or more tenants may not exceed 1.5 square feet of sign area for each linear foot of building frontage. No total sign area, including the area of any freestanding sign, may exceed 200 square feet in area.~~

In PD-MU and PD-MC districts of at least 20 acres, development projects will be permitted the following signs:

[1] A freestanding sign at a major entrance adjacent to a public street right-of-way greater than 70 feet in width. The sign shall not exceed 30 feet in height. The sign shall not exceed 200 square feet. Up to 100 square feet of the total sign area can be used as off-premises signs for uses within the district.

[2] A freestanding sign at each existing major intersection at the boundary of the district, not to exceed 15 feet in height and 100 square feet in sign area.

(b) ~~Freestanding signs for commercial, industrial, or retail properties may not exceed 15 feet in height. Individual parcels within a PD-MU and PD-MC may be permitted:~~

[1] Building-mounted signage.

<b><u>Non-residential and Mixed-use Buildings</u></b>	<b><u>Residential Buildings</u></b>
<u>Building-mounted signage of up to one square foot for each linear foot of building perimeter, up to 250 square feet of total building-mounted signage or 25% of the total building-mounted signage allowed, whichever is greater, per building side</u>  <u>and</u>	<u>Building-mounted signage of up to 0.3 square feet per linear foot of building perimeter, up to 50 square feet of total building-mounted signage per building side</u>

<p><u>Additional 0.25 square feet of building-mounted signage per linear foot of building front for buildings with three or more stories</u></p>	
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[2] A freestanding sign up to 10 feet high and 100 square feet in area. A freestanding sign identifying more than one user may be up to 150 square feet in area.

[3] An off-premises freestanding sign up to 10 feet high and 100 square feet in area if the subject of the sign is on a site or lot of at least 100,000 square feet that does not abut a four-lane major thoroughfare, and the sign is located within 300 feet of the subject.

~~(e)~~[4] Two signs are permitted for each stacking lane of an accessory drive-through use. The signs shall not be included in calculating the number of freestanding signs or in calculating the total aggregate sign area. One sign is limited to six feet in height and 30 square feet in area. One sign is limited to six feet in height and 15 square feet in area. Signs shall be installed within 10 feet of the drive-through lane.

**Sec. III. Effective date.**

This ordinance becomes effective immediately.

**Votes:**

**Ayes:**

**Nays:**

**Absent from Vote:**

**Absent from Meeting:**

Approved as to form:

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Kathleen Dooley, City Attorney

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***Clerk's Certificate***

*I, the undersigned, certify that I am Clerk of Council of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and that the foregoing is a true copy of Ordinance No. 20- duly adopted at a meeting of the City Council meeting held Date, 2020 at which a quorum was present and voted.*

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***Tonya B. Lacey, CMC***  
***Clerk of Council***



**MOTION: GRAHAM**

May 12, 2020  
Regular Meeting  
Resolution 20-34

**SECOND: WITHERS**

**RE: Initiating Amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance, §72-59 Signage, to Update Building Signage Standards in Commercial, Industrial, and Planned Development Districts and Update the Freestanding Sign Standards in Planned Development Districts**

**ACTION: APPROVED: Ayes: 7; Nays: 0**

The purpose of these amendments is to revise the sign regulations of the Unified Development Ordinance to:

- 1) allow additional building signage per side and for buildings with multiple floors in the Commercial, Industrial, and Planned Development Districts. The proposed amendment would increase the maximum building signage permitted on any one building side to 250 square feet or 25 percent of the total building signage allowed, whichever is greater. It would also permit an additional 0.25 square feet of signage per linear foot of frontage/building perimeter for buildings with three or more stories.
- 2) differentiate the building signage standards between non-residential or mixed-use buildings and residential buildings in the Commercial and Planned-Development Districts. The proposed change would add a specific standard for residential buildings, limiting them to 0.5 square feet of signage per linear foot of building frontage, up to 50 total square feet maximum in Commercial Districts and 0.3 square feet of signage per linear foot of building perimeter, up to 50 square feet maximum in Planned Development Districts.
- 3) Update the freestanding sign standards in all Planned Development Districts. Currently, the Code does not provide for freestanding “development signage” for institutional and residential uses in these districts. In anticipation of increased development of this type, the proposed amendments would add standards to permit freestanding signs at major entrances and intersections for institutional and residential uses. The proposed changes also update the existing freestanding sign regulations in the PD-C to preclude large scale signage in smaller PD-C districts, reduce maximum sign height, define major entrances, and allow styles other than monument signs.

The proposed amendments provide updates that reflect the evolving needs and developmental trends in these districts, and they have been developed in consultation with business community stakeholders.

In initiating these amendments, the City Council has considered the factors listed in Code of Virginia § 15.2-2284. The City Council has determined that public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice favor the amendments.

Therefore, the City Council hereby resolves that:

- The City Council initiates amendments to City Code Chapter 72, the Unified Development Ordinance, as described above.
- The City Council refers this proposal to the Planning Commission for review, public hearing, and recommendation under the procedures set forth in City Code § 72-22.1.

**Votes:**

**Ayes:** Greenlaw, Withers, Devine, Duffy, Frye, Graham, Kelly

**Nays:** None

**Absent from Vote:** None

**Absent from Meeting:** None

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***Clerk's Certificate***

*I certify that I am Clerk of Council of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and that the foregoing is a true copy of Resolution No. 20-34, adopted at a meeting of the City Council held May 12, 2020, at which a quorum was present and voted.*



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***Tonya B. Lacey, MMC***  
***Clerk of Council***