

10.800 BG, Downtown Business/Government District

(ZC2018-008; Ordinance No. 2018-6-11 and ZC2003-52; Ordinance No. 2003-10-32)

.1 Purpose

The BG district is intended to serve as a pedestrian-oriented center for retail, office, governmental, cultural, entertainment, and residential uses. It is designed to ensure that development, redevelopment, and renovation within the district are consistent with the historical character of Plano's original business district and the surrounding area. The standards of this district apply to specific characteristics of Plano's downtown area and are not appropriate for other locations and districts.

.2 Permitted Uses

See the nonresidential districts use table in Sec. [14.200](#) for a complete listing.

.3 Area, Yard, and Bulk Requirements

The following area, yard, and bulk requirements apply to all development in the BG district unless otherwise expressly stated: (ZC2025-007; Ord. No. 2025-8-13)

Description	Nonresidential, Multifamily, and Mixed-use Residential Requirement	Single-Family Attached Requirement
Minimum Lot Area	None	700 square feet
Minimum Lot Width	None	20 feet
Minimum Lot Depth	None	35 feet
Front Yard Setbacks (except as noted in Sec. 13.500.2 and Other Height/Setback Requirements below) (ZC2023-002; Ordinance No. 2023-9-13)	See Sec. 10.800.5A and 10.800.5B	See Sec. 10.800.5A and 10.800.5B
Side Yard Setbacks		
Interior Side Yard	None, except as provided in Sec. 13.500.3	None, except as provided in Sec. 13.500.3
Exterior Side Yard (Corner Lot)	Same as front (See Sec. 10.800.5B)	Same as front (See Sec. 10.800.5B)
Minimum Rear Yard	None except as provided in Sec. 13.500.4 and Other Height/Setback Requirements below.	None

Article 10: Nonresidential Districts
10.800: BG, Downtown Business/Government District

Description	Nonresidential, Multifamily, and Mixed-use Residential Requirement	Single-Family Attached Requirement
Maximum Height (<i>ZC2023-002; Ordinance No. 2023-9-13</i>)	4 story (except as noted in Other Height/Setback Requirements below).	3 story, 50 feet
	Four stories of multifamily are permitted on a horizontal structural podium above a single level at grade of structured parking, and/or nonresidential uses and/or flex space units (below-grade parking is excluded). Flex space units are defined as a ground floor unit that may be occupied by a residential use, a nonresidential use, or both. Flex space units must have an individual exterior entrance and a minimum floor-to-ceiling separation of 9 feet. A flex-space unit must be constructed to accommodate nonresidential uses and may not be modified to prevent nonresidential occupancy. (<i>ZC2023-019, Ord. No. 2024-2-7</i>)	
	The maximum height for parking structures shall be 5 levels at or above grade. Parking structures shall be obscured from view of streets and/or public ways designated as Downtown Couplet or Gateway Corridor on the Thoroughfare Plan Map, plus 15th Street by buildings of equal or greater height and/or special architectural and/or landscaping treatments approved in conjunction with a preliminary site plan or site plan.	
Maximum Lot Coverage	None, except as limited by applicable setback requirements from Front Yard Setbacks, Side Yard Setbacks, Minimum Rear Yard, and Maximum Height above and Other Height/Setback Requirements below.	100% including accessory buildings
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	Nonresidential: 4:1 except as limited by applicable setback requirements from Front Yard Setbacks, Side Yard Setbacks, Minimum Rear Yard, and Maximum Height above and Other Height/Setback Requirements below. Multifamily and Mixed-use Residential: None	None

Description	Nonresidential, Multifamily, and Mixed-use Residential Requirement	Single-Family Attached Requirement
Other Height/Setback Requirements (<i>ZC2023-002; Ordinance No. 2023-9-13</i>)	In addition to the front, side, and rear yard requirements noted above, the following minimum setbacks shall apply to all structures as measured from the district boundary line of the nearest single-family and two-family residential zoning districts:	None, except as noted below.
	Nonresidential: 50 feet for 1 or 2 story	
	Multifamily and Mixed-use Residential: 25 feet for 1 or 2 story	
	Nonresidential: 200 feet for 3 or 4 story, except when separated by a street and/or public way designated as Downtown Couplet or Gateway Corridor on the Thoroughfare Plan Map and/or a railroad or transit right-of-way. In such cases, the setback shall be 50 feet. Multifamily and Mixed-use Residential: 25 feet for 3 or 4 story	

.4 Parking Requirements

(*ZC2025-007; Ord. No. 2025-8-13*)

(Except as noted below, all parking requirements of [Article 16](#) shall apply)

A. Multifamily Residence

One parking space is required for each Multifamily Residential dwelling or live/work/flex unit, except as noted in Sec. [10.800.4D](#) and Sec. [10.800.4E](#). Compact parking is not permitted for Multifamily Residential dwellings.

B. Single-Family Attached Residence

Two parking spaces shall be provided for each dwelling unit as noted in Sec. [10.800.5F](#). (*ZC2023-002; Ordinance No. 2023-9-13*)

C. Other Uses

One parking space for every 300 square feet of floor area except as noted in Sec. [10.800.4D](#), Sec. [10.800.4E](#) and [Sec. 10.800.4F](#)

D. Credit for Public Parking

With preliminary site plan or site plan approval, the Planning & Zoning Commission may grant credit for available public parking that is accessible to a proposed development or redevelopment project.

E. Destruction of Conforming Structures

Any existing parking or lack of same for any conforming structure within the BG district as of December 9, 2002, shall be considered a conforming parking arrangement. In the event of destruction of a conforming structure in the BG district, the structure may be rebuilt to its pre-destruction size with no requirements for additional parking. If the structure is rebuilt to exceed its pre-destruction size, it shall comply with Sec. [10.800.4A](#), Sec. [10.800.4B](#), Sec. [10.800.4C](#) and Sec. [10.800.4D](#).

F. Additions to Existing Buildings

Any existing parking or lack of same for any conforming structure within the BG district as of December 9, 2002, shall be considered a conforming parking arrangement. Additional parking shall be provided only for additions to an existing conforming building. Existing structures designated as Heritage Resource properties may be expanded up to a total additional area of 4,500 square feet without providing additional parking.

G. Parking Space Size

Up to 50% of required off-street parking for nonresidential uses may include compact car spaces at a minimum size of 7.5 feet by 16 feet, if the compact car parking is private and unavailable to the public. In addition, off-street parking facilities shall have minimum aisle width of 22 feet, unless angle parking is used. (See [16.300](#) through [16.500](#)) (ZC2025-007; Ord. No. 2025-8-13)

H. Parking Placement

Onsite surface parking shall generally not be placed in the required front yard and shall generally be separated from public streets by the building which it serves. Exceptions to this requirement include:

i. Lots Containing Surface Parking Only

Where a lot is used entirely for offsite parking for a use on another lot, the above placement requirements shall not apply.

ii. Multiple-Fronted Lots

Surface parking on corner lots or other lots with frontage on 2 or more public streets shall comply with above placement requirements along at least one street frontage.

iii. Lots Facing Residential Districts

Where a 3- or 4-story building is constructed with an extended front yard setback in accordance with the other height/setback requirements of Sec. [10.800.3](#), the above placement requirements shall not apply.

iv. Additions to Existing Buildings

Where onsite surface parking is constructed to serve existing buildings or additions to existing buildings, the above placement requirements shall not apply.

I. Landscaping for Parking Areas

- i.** A minimum 5-foot landscape edge shall be provided between all parking lots and public streets. Within this landscape edge, 10 shrubs (5-gallon minimum) shall be planted per 500 square feet. The number of required shrubs shall be calculated solely on the area of the required landscape edge. See [Figure 10-1](#).

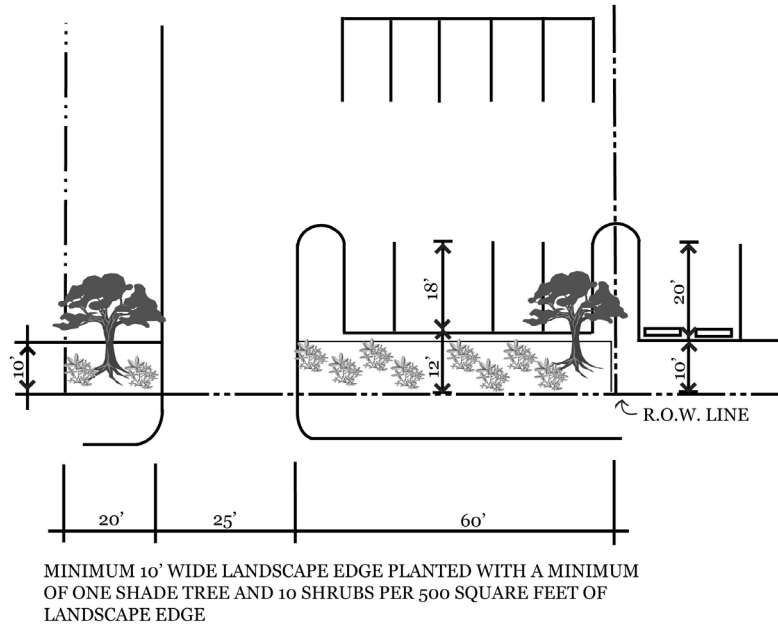


Figure 10-1: Landscape Edge

- ii. A berm may be placed within the landscape edge in lieu of the required shrubs unless needed for a headlight screen. The berm must be 18 to 40 inches above the average grade of the street and parking lot curbs. The slope of the berm shall not exceed a 3 to 1 grade. Retaining walls may be used to facilitate berming if they are not visible from the street.
 - iii. The following provisions shall also apply to landscape edges around parking lots:
 - a. If the parking lot is located 50 feet or more from the street right-of-way line, no shrubs or berms will be required.
 - b. The applicant is also encouraged to plant a variety of ornamental trees and flowers in addition to the required plantings. Any permeable surface not occupied by trees, shrubs, planting beds, signs, or other permitted fixtures shall be planted with turf or other living groundcover.
 - c. Where a row of parking spaces faces a public street, tree islands shall be provided at intervals of one per 15 spaces. The islands shall extend the full length of the parking space and shall be a minimum width of 10 feet. Trees planted in the islands shall be selected, installed and maintained in accordance with Secs. [17.400](#), [17.500](#) and [17.600](#).
 - iv. No site developed prior to December 9, 2002, shall be required to conform to the landscaping requirements of this section unless the site is being redeveloped or there is a 30% or more increase in the existing square footage of building area and/or reconstruction of the existing parking lot.
- J. Landscaping/Screening for Parking Lots Adjacent to Residential Areas**
Where parking is within 50 feet of residentially-zoned property and is not screened from view by a wall, berm, or other screen specified in [Article 20](#), a continuous

screen of shrubs (5-gallon minimum) must be placed adjacent to the parking. The required landscaping shall comply with the following regulations:

- i. The required shrubs shall create a minimum 3-foot tall screen within 2 years of planting.
- ii. Drought and freeze-resistant shrubs shall be used including, but not limited to, Photinia, Dwarf Burford Holly, Dwarf Chinese Holly, or Dwarf Yaupon Holly. Other plants may be used with staff approval.
- iii. All plant materials shall be selected, installed, and maintained in accordance with Secs. [17.400](#), [17.500](#) and [17.600](#).

.5 Special District Requirements

(ZC2023-002; Ordinance No. 2023-9-13)

A. Shy Zone Setbacks

The BG district utilizes a “Shy Zone” approach to front yard setbacks. The shy zone functions like a traditional setback, except that it allows for encroachments of certain architectural and site design elements that enhance the streetscape and provide visual interest to buildings. Shy zones are based on the planned right-of-ways in the Street Design Standards and Thoroughfare Plan Map, rather than property lines. Shy zones must conform to the following criteria:

- i. Shy zones shall be measured from the outside edge of the cross-sections listed in the Street Design Standards (See [Figure 10-2](#)). Shy zones vary by street type as follows:

Street Classification	Shy Zone
Downtown Couplet	4 feet
Gateway Corridors	4 feet
Mixed-Use Local Streets	3 feet
Residential Local Streets	10 feet
Mews Streets and Special Streets	3 feet
Unspecified Streets	4 feet

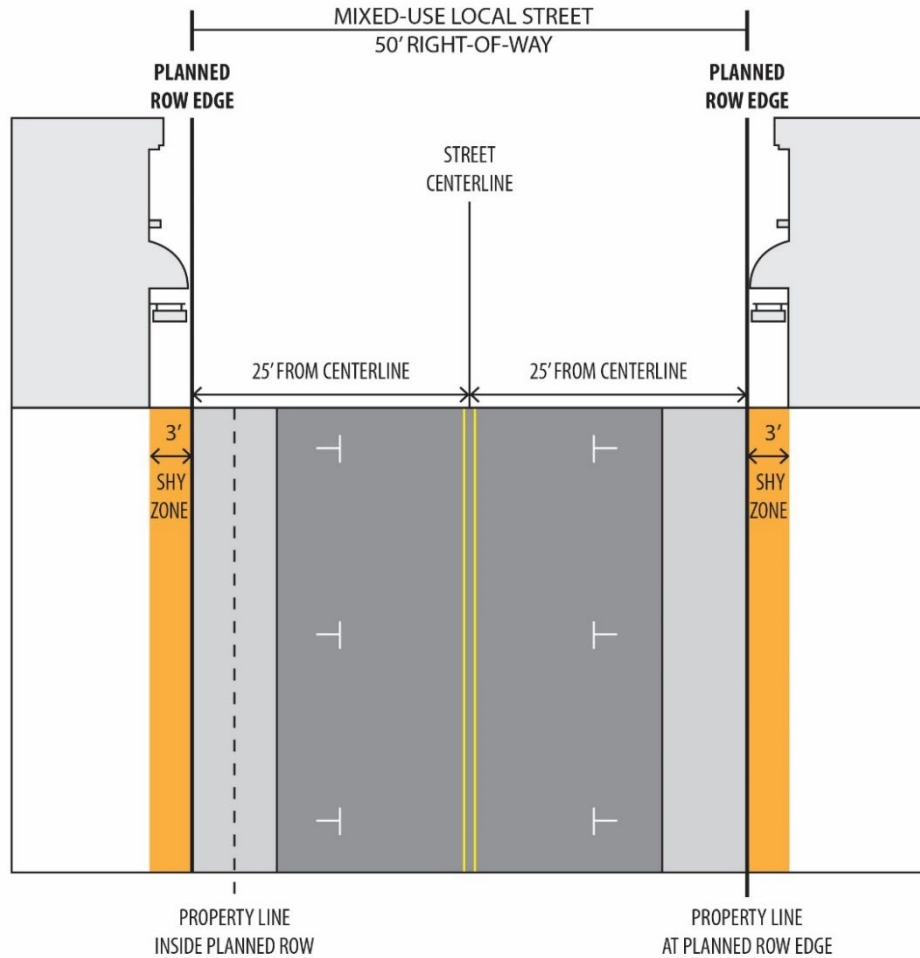


Figure 10-2: Shy Zone Example

- ii. Where the planned right-of-way varies from the standard cross-sections provided in the Street Design Standards due to the provision of angled parking; wider travel lanes, green zones, or sidewalks; fire lane requirements; or other authorized variations, the shy zone shall be measured from the outside edge of planned right-of-way inclusive of such variations. See [Figure 10-3](#).

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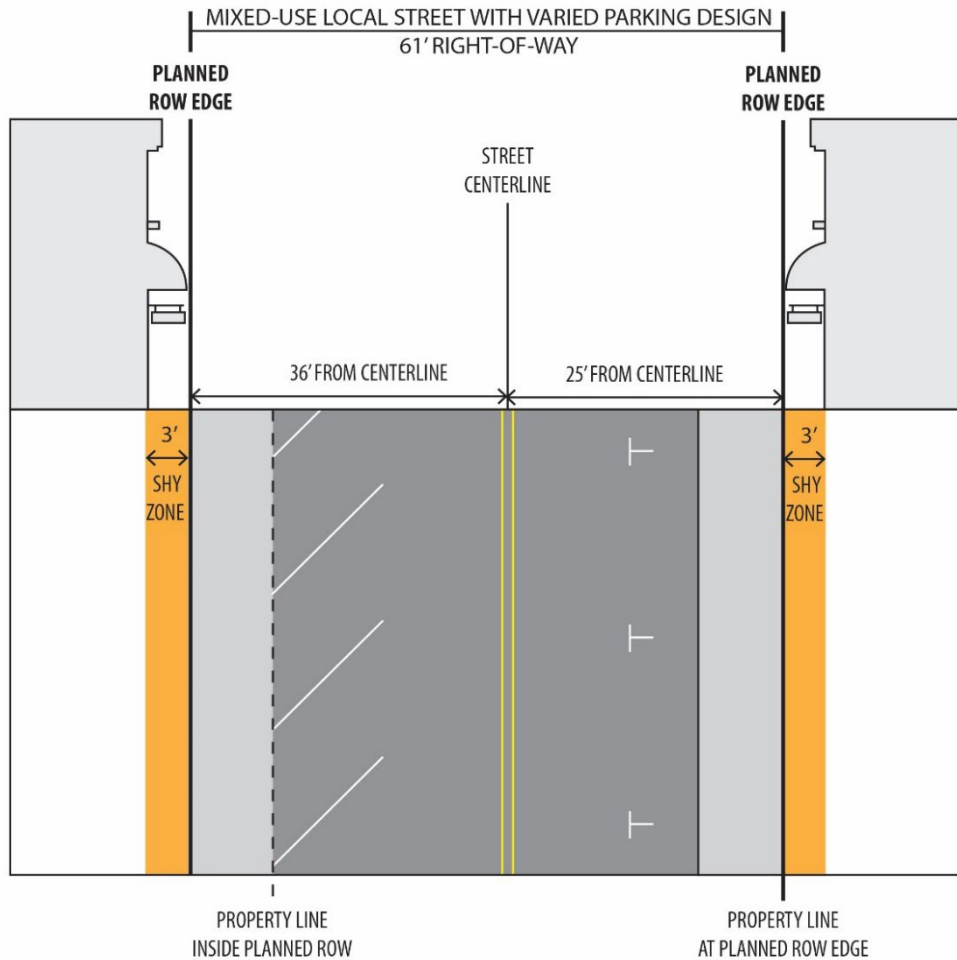


Figure 10-3: Shy Zone Examples with Variations

- iii. At least two-thirds of the front façade of the building shall fall within 10 feet of the shy zone setback unless restricted by easements. Where easements are present, at least two-thirds of the front façade of the building shall be built to the easement line.
- iv. Architectural and site design features such as sidewalks, patios, porches, stoops, balconies, awnings, outdoor seating, foundation plantings, planter boxes, ornamental trees, signs, light fixtures, leader heads and downspouts, roof overhangs, and accessibility ramps may encroach within the shy zone.
- v. For multifamily, mixed-use residential, and nonresidential buildings, architectural design features used to provide building articulation may encroach up to one foot into the shy zone. These encroachments are limited to a total of no more than 50% of the front façade (where the shy zone is 3 feet, up to 1 foot is allowed in shy zone). (*ZC2025-007; Ord. No. 2025-8-13*)
- vi. Enclosed habitable floor area and parking spaces may not encroach within the shy zone (with the exception for the second floor and above, if the ground floor includes a minimum 7-foot sidewalk separated from the street by a colonnade along the entire block face).

- vii. Utility connections are permitted in the shy zone where screened or camouflaged.
- viii. On corner lots, shy zone requirements also apply to the side yard adjacent to a street.

B. A nonconforming building may be reconstructed to its original setback for any building reconstruction initiated within five years of demolition. Reconstruction projects which go dormant or are not completed are no longer qualified for this allowance.

C. Street types and cross-sections should use the Mixed-Use Local Street type in the Downtown Streets Plan of the Street Design Standards.

D. [Reserved] (ZC2025-007; Ord. No. 2025-8-13)

E. Special Regulations for Multifamily Residences

- i. Minimum Floor Area per Dwelling Unit:

Unit Type	Minimum Floor Area
Efficiency	400 square feet
1 bedroom	475 square feet
2 bedroom	625 square feet
Each additional bedroom	150 square feet

- ii. In buildings greater than 100 units, the following regulations apply:

- a. A minimum of 20% of units must be 2 bedrooms or more; and
- b. The average unit size will be a minimum of 700 square feet.

- iii. [Reserved] (ZC2025-007; Ord. No. 2025-8-13)

iv. No more than 300 dwelling units may be located within any block bounded by streets, public ways, and/or railroad or transit rights-of-way. (ZC2011-30; Ordinance No. 2011-10-17; ZC2008-51; Ordinance No. 2008-5-33)

v. Usable open space requirements as specified in Sec. [13.800](#) shall not apply.

vi. The above requirements shall also apply to situations where only one or 2 units are included in a building.

F. Special Regulations for Single-Family Attached Residences (townhouses)

- i. Each dwelling unit shall be on an individually-platted lot. No more than 50% of the lots within a development may abut a mews street as the only point of street frontage and access.

- ii. [Reserved] (ZC2025-007; Ord. No. 2025-8-13)

- iii. Minimum Floor Area per Dwelling Unit: 800 square feet

- iv. Maximum Building Length: 200 feet

- v. Buildings must be separated by a minimum distance of 10 feet.

- vi. No usable open space areas are required.

- vii. Each dwelling unit shall have a garage with a minimum of 2 parking spaces. Garage entrances shall be allowed only from a mews street or alley. The distance from the garage to the travel lane of the alley or mews street shall be 5 or less feet in length or shall be 20 feet or greater in length. The elimination of the garage space, by enclosing the garage with a stationary wall, shall be prohibited.
- viii. Fencing is allowed in the front yard setback up to 8 feet in height. Fencing is restricted to wrought iron, tubular steel, tubular aluminum, or masonry. Fencing must be 50% open in construction for each unit. Each unit with a fence in the front yard must have an operable gate that opens to the street.

.6 Sign Regulations

(ZC2014-12; Ordinance No. 2014-7-12)

A. Purpose

The purpose of this section is to regulate the construction of new signs and alterations made to existing signs to ensure consistency with the historic, urban, pedestrian-oriented nature of this district, and the dense, compact development absent in other areas of the city. The objective of this section is to ensure (1) that new signage is appropriate to the architectural design of the building and the district and (2) that signs do not visually obscure significant architectural features of a building or the district in general.

B. General Provisions

i. Issuance of Sign Permit and Certificate of Appropriateness

Signs shall conform to the criteria in this section and to appropriate city codes, including obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness if located in a Heritage Resource Overlay District, prior to issuance of a sign permit. *(ZC2016-025; Ordinance No. 2016-8-6)*

ii. Compatibility with Building Architecture

Signs should generally be designed to be compatible with the architectural composition of the building and the district and not obscure any architectural accent, pattern, or object on the original structure.

iii. Sign Materials

Sign finish materials shall be one of the following:

- a. Metal, painted or enameled.
- b. Cold cathode tube (neon).
- c. Carved relief in stone or cast stone.
- d. Wood or carved wood which is painted or sealed.
- e. The use of plastic on the exterior of a sign is prohibited, except on a marquee and institution signs.

iv. Lighting of Signs

- a. All electrical shall comply with the currently adopted version of the National Electrical Code.

- a.** Any sign not specifically permitted by this section is prohibited.

- b. Any sign that flashes, blinks, revolves, or is put into motion by the atmosphere will not be permitted unless otherwise allowed in this section.
- c. Portable signs, except for a-frame or sandwich board signs, will not be permitted.

E. Permitted Signs

- i. A-frame/Sandwich Board Sign
- ii. Armature Sign
- iii. Awning Sign
- iv. Banner Sign
- v. Directory Sign
- vi. Hanging Sign
- vii. Institution Sign
- viii. Marquee Sign
- ix. Municipally-owned Sign
- x. Mural Sign
- xi. Onsite Directional Sign
- xii. Projecting Sign
- xiii. Wall Sign - Attached
- xiv. Window Sign

F. Sign Standards

i. General

- a. Each business with direct first floor access is permitted one hanging, awning, or wall sign and one armature sign per street frontage.
- b. Each building is permitted one building identification sign.

ii. A-frame/Sandwich Board Signs

a. General

No more than one a-frame or sandwich board sign per business shall be allowed, and a minimum of four feet of clear sidewalk shall be maintained at all times. The sign shall be sufficiently weighted or anchored to prevent movement by wind or other elements.

b. Sign Area and Size

No a-frame or sandwich board sign shall exceed eight square feet per face or four feet in height. The entire sign structure shall be calculated as the total of sign area.

iii. Armature Signs

a. Sign Area

The sign area of any one face shall not exceed 16 square feet in area. The sign area of an armature sign shall not comprise more than 70% of the entire sign structure.

b. Sign Size

The maximum height of an armature sign structure shall be six feet. The maximum width shall be four feet.

c. Location

An armature sign may be placed adjacent to the public right-of-way provided it does not encroach on the sight visibility triangle and is a minimum of six feet from the outside curb line.

iv. Awning Signs

a. Sign Location

The awning sign shall be located within the center 75% of the frontage of the awning, the tenancy, or the building face, whichever is least. Awning signs must maintain a minimum border of one inch between the letters or logo and the edge or a change of plane.

b. Sign Size

The maximum size of letters shall be eight inches. A logo may extend up to 12 inches tall provided the appropriate border is maintained.

v. Banner Signs

a. General

Each business shall be allowed two banner permits per calendar year, and each permit shall be good for a maximum of 30 days. A minimum of 30 days shall be required between each banner permit. Banners shall be kept in good repair and remain firmly anchored or secured.

b. Location and Content

No more than one banner sign shall be permitted across the facade of a building or business or in any other location on a single property. The city, or an agent of the city, may mount banners on street light standards and/or across the street for special events, subject to installation policy and the following regulations:

- i. A banner must display artwork or a message that pertains to the district, a holiday, a welcome, or a special event.
- ii. Up to ten percent of the effective area of a banner may contain the words or logos that identify a sponsor of a cultural event or activity.
- iii. No more than two banner signs shall be permitted across any one street between two intersecting streets.

vi. Building Identification Signs

Building identification signs shall be considered as projecting signs or wall signs, attached or painted, for purposes of this section, except when historic.

vii. Directory Signs

a. General

On multi-tenant buildings where there are two or more tenants without direct outside access to a public street, a directory sign may be allowed. One directory sign per street, alley, or mews face is permitted. (ZC2016-025; Ordinance No. 2016-8-6)

b. Type

A directory sign may take the form of an armature sign, projecting sign on ground floor of a building, or wall sign on ground floor of a building and must follow the regulations for each.

c. Sign Area

A directory sign may contain four square feet, with an additional one-and-a-half square feet, for each tenant having a separate lease space, up to a maximum area of ten square feet.

viii. Hanging Signs

a. Location

Hanging signs must maintain a minimum clearance of seven feet above the sidewalk and one foot from the curb.

b. Sign Area

No hanging sign area shall exceed six square feet in area per face.

ix. Marquee Signs

a. General

Marquee signs shall be permitted only on a theater or performance hall. Only one marquee sign shall be allowed for each building containing a theater or performance hall.

b. Lighting

A marquee sign may have backlighting, exposed incandescent bulbs, or neon lighting.

c. Sign Area

The sign area of a marquee sign on a facility with a seating capacity of 750 or less may not exceed 100 square feet in area, including all sign faces. The sign area of a marquee sign on a facility with a seating capacity of more than 750 may not exceed 200 square feet.

d. Sign Size

Marquee signs must not exceed six feet in height and must maintain a minimum clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk.

x. Municipally-owned Signs

Municipally-owned signs shall be regulated by Sec. [22.300](#).

xi. Mural Signs

Mural signs shall be regulated by Sec. [22.300](#). (ZC2016-025; Ordinance No. 2016-8-6)

xii. Onsite Directional Signs

Onsite directional signs shall not exceed eight square feet or 30 inches in height and shall not contain advertising.

xiii. Projecting Signs

a. General

Projecting signs greater than 20 inches in width must maintain a minimum clearance of seven feet above the ground or sidewalk and two feet from the curb. A projecting sign must not extend above the wall to which it is attached.

b. Sign Area and Structure Size

A projecting sign located within seven feet of the ground or sidewalk shall not exceed five square feet in area per face. The area per face of a projecting sign located over seven feet above the ground or sidewalk shall be calculated based on the total height of the wall to which the sign is attached at one square foot per one foot of wall height. The maximum height of the total sign structure shall not exceed one-third of the total height of the wall to which it is attached and shall not project more than six feet.

xiv. Wall Signs - Attached

a. General

An attached wall sign must be mounted parallel to the wall surface and may not extend above the wall to which it is attached. Attached wall signs may not project more than six inches from the wall surface.

b. Sign Area and Structure Size

The maximum permitted sign area for a single business or single storefront shall be one square foot per linear foot of business frontage along a public street, alley, or mews. The width of the sign structure shall not exceed half the width of the business's linear frontage. The maximum height of the sign structure shall not exceed one-third of the total height of the wall to which it is attached. (*ZC2016-025; Ordinance No. 2016-8-6*)

c. Wall Signs Used for Building Identification Purposes

The sign area for an attached wall sign used for building identification purposes shall be calculated based on the width of the building's facade to which the sign is attached. The width of the sign structure shall not exceed half the width of the building's linear frontage. The maximum height of the sign structure shall not exceed one-third of the total height of the wall to which it is attached.

xv. Wall Signs - Painted

a. Sign Area

The maximum permitted sign area for a single business or single storefront shall be one square foot per linear foot of business frontage along a public street, alley, or mews. The width of the sign shall not exceed half the width of the business's linear frontage. The maximum height of

the sign shall not exceed one-third of the total height of the wall to which it is attached. (ZC2016-025; Ordinance No. 2016-8-6)

b. Wall Signs Used for Building Identification Purposes

The sign area for a painted wall sign used for building identification purposes shall be calculated based on the width of the building's facade to which the sign is attached. The width of the sign shall not exceed half the width of the building's linear frontage. The maximum height of the sign shall not exceed one-third of the total height of the wall to which it is attached.

xvi. Window Signs

a. General

Window signs shall only be permitted on the ground floor of a building.

b. Sign Area

- i. No window sign or signs shall cover more than 25% of any individual window.
 - ii. Window signs that exceed 15% of an individual window shall obtain a permit, unless the sign is a noncommercial temporary sign. All window signs located in a Heritage Resource Overlay District, except for Incidental Signs, require a Certificate of Appropriateness. (ZC2016-025; Ordinance No. 2016-8-6)
 - iii. Window sign area shall not exceed 40 square feet on any facade.
- c.** Signs may be applied to, attached to, or located within 12 inches of a window on the interior of the establishment.

xvii. Institution Signs

Institution signs shall not exceed 32 square feet with a maximum height of six feet, and shall be monument-type signs. Required setback shall be eight feet from the front property line (or any property line adjacent to a street) and 30 feet from any adjoining property line. Institution signs are limited to one per street front along major streets only as defined by Sec. [10.800.5A.i](#)

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