

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 15.60 OF THE WINNETKA
VILLAGE CODE AND THE VILLAGE’S DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES
CONCERNING SIGN REGULATIONS**

WHEREAS, the Village of Winnetka is a home rule municipality in accordance with Article VII, Section 6 of the Constitution of the State of Illinois of 1970 and has the authority to exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 15.60 of the Winnetka Village Code, as amended (“*Village Code*”), regulates the installation signs (“*Sign Regulations*”); and

WHEREAS, the Village has adopted Design Review Guidelines, which among other things, govern the design of signs in the Village; and

WHEREAS, the Village desires to amend the Sign Regulations and Design Review Guidelines to update, modernize, and make more efficient the regulations governing signs and the sign review and permitting process; and

WHEREAS, the Village Council has determined amending the Sign Regulations as set forth in this Ordinance is in the best interests of the Village;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council of the Village of Winnetka does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1: RECITALS. The foregoing recitals are hereby incorporated into this Section as the findings of the Village Council, as if fully set forth herein.

SECTION 2: AMENDMENT TO SECTION 15.60.090 OF THE VILLAGE CODE. Section 15.60.090, titled “Permitted Temporary Signs,” of Chapter 15.60, titled “Signs,” of Title 15, titled “Buildings and Construction,” of the Village Code shall be amended to read as follows:

“Section 15.60.090 Permitted temporary signs.

A. Signs Permitted. The following temporary signs shall be allowed without a permit; provided, they meet the requirements of this section; and provided further, that, unless specifically provided otherwise, the area of the sign shall not exceed eight (8) square feet:

* * *

5. Window signs displayed on nonresidential premises located in a commercial zoning district to advertise special sales of merchandise or special commercial events, subject to the following conditions:

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- a. No such sign may be illuminated;₂
- b. No such sign shall be more than eight square feet in area and the total area of all temporary window signs, ~~both temporary and permanent~~, shall not exceed the ~~ten (10)~~ percent of the window area limitation for window signs as provided in Section 15.60.120(B)(1)(d);₂
- c. No such sign shall be displayed for more than thirty (30) days;₂

* * *

SECTION 3: AMENDMENT TO SECTION 15.60.120 OF THE VILLAGE CODE.

Section 15.60.120, titled “Commercial Signs,” of Chapter 15.60, titled “Signs,” of Title 15, titled “Buildings and Construction,” of the Village Code shall be amended to read as follows:

“Section 15.60.120 Commercial signs.

- A. Defined. All signs not included or regulated in Sections 15.60.080, 15.60.090, 15.60.100 and 15.60.110 and not exempt pursuant to Section 15.60.070 shall be deemed to be commercial signs for the purposes of this chapter, regardless of the zoning district in which the signs are located.
- B. Regulations. Commercial signs of any type not prohibited by Section 15.60.060 may be displayed, subject to obtaining a permit pursuant to this chapter; provided, they comply with the following regulations and the general standards set forth in Section 15.60.130:
 - 1. ~~Wall Signs and Window Signs.~~
 - a. No wall sign shall contain information other than the name of the occupant or business, a maximum of three words containing a generic description of the types of products or services, and the occupant's logo or trademark.
 - b. No wall sign ~~or window sign~~ shall exceed seventy (70) square feet in area.
 - c. Wall signs shall be placed substantially parallel to the surface of the wall.
 - d. ~~Window signs may be displayed on the street exposure or nonstreet exposure windows of an occupant; provided that, the total area of window signs in any single window pane or~~

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~~any single section of window shall not exceed ten (10) percent of the area of the single window pane or single section of window on which it is located.~~

- e. ~~For each street exposure the total area of all window signs, wall signs and awning signs other than exempt signs, permitted directional signs, display case signs, and incidental signs of this section, shall not exceed fifteen (15) percent of the total area of street exposure.~~
- f. ~~In buildings with more than one commercial premises, the total area of all commercial wall signs, window signs, and awning signs shall be limited to fifteen (15) percent of the area of street exposure of the occupant of each such premises.~~
- gd. Commercial wall signs shall be displayed only upon street exposures; except that one wall sign not exceeding twenty (20) square feet in area may be displayed by each occupant on each nonstreet exposure of the premises occupied by such occupant; provided that, such signs shall not be located above the second floor window sill level and shall not be higher than fourteen (14) feet above grade if there is no second floor window sill. The total area of all such nonstreet exposure wall signs displayed on a building shall be limited to forty (40) square feet and the area of such signs shall count toward the maximum sign area allowed for the street exposure of such occupant as provided in this section. This provision shall not prohibit window signs or the painting of signs on doors.
- h. ~~In cases where an occupant of a building occupied by no more than two commercial occupants does not have any street exposure, such occupant shall be permitted to display on or attach to the building, including the doors and windows, one commercial sign the area of which shall not exceed five square feet. The area of such sign shall be included in the fifteen (15) percent overall limitation established in this section.~~
- ie. In addition to other signs displayed on or attached to a building, a building occupied by three or more commercial occupants may display a directory type wall sign (subject to the fifteen (15) percent limitations contained within subsections (B)(1)(e) and (B)(1)(f) of this section) which lists only the names of such commercial occupants and the name of the building. The total area of such a directory-type sign

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shall not exceed thirty-five (35) square feet in area and no one individual listing shall exceed three square feet in area.

- f. For a building that contains more than one type of sign (e.g. wall, window, awning, etc.) on a street exposure, a sign must also comply within subsection 15.60.120.B.9.

2. Window Signs.

- a. A window sign that meets all of the following requirements may be administratively approved by the Director of Community Development or their designee. A sign that does not meet all the following requirements must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board.

- i. Window signs may be displayed on the street exposure or nonstreet exposure windows of an occupant; provided that, the total area of window signs in any single window pane or any single section of window shall not exceed 10 percent of the area of the single window pane or single section of window on which it is located, except window signs in a door window or transom window shall not exceed 50 percent of the window pane.
- ii. Letters and logos that are part of a window sign shall be no taller than eight inches, except: (i) one logo and the first letter of each word may be up to and no taller than 24 inches; and (ii) lettering that lists store hours and contact information shall be limited to 2 inches in height.
- iii. Overall height of a window sign shall be limited to one-third of the height of the glass area, and the width of a window sign shall be limited to 90 percent of the glass width.
- iv. Decal window signs shall be die-cut and limited to individual letters and logos (e.g., they do not have a background panel).
- v. Decal window signs shall be limited to two colors.
- vi. Floating window signs shall be limited to letters and logos of no more than two colors on a solid

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background of another color, for a total of three colors.

vii. Highly reflective materials are not permitted as part of a window sign.

viii. No window sign shall be illuminated.

ix. A window sign shall be only located in the lower two-thirds of the window opening. This regulation does not apply to a window sign in a door window or transom window.

x. No window sign shall extend over or through architectural features, including but not limited to window muntins.

xi. A decal window sign shall only be applied to the interior of the window.

x. Street exposures with more than one type of sign must also comply with subsection 150.120.B.9.

b. A window sign that does not meet all of the requirements for administrative approval listed in subsection 15.60.120.B.2.a. shall require a certificate of appropriateness issued pursuant to Section 15.60.150 of this Code. In addition, such signs shall meet the following requirements. Any variation from the following requirements, when permitted by this Code, shall require approval of a variation pursuant to Section 15.60.250 of this Code.

i. Window signs may be displayed on the street exposure or nonstreet exposure windows of an occupant; provided that, the total area of window signs in any single window pane or any single section of window shall not exceed 10 percent of the area of the single window pane or single section of window on which it is located, except window signs in a door window or transom window shall not exceed 50 percent of the any single window pane.

ii. Decal window signs shall be die-cut and limited to individual letters and logos (i.e. do not have a background panel).

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iii. Window signs shall only be externally illuminated, and may not be illuminated in any other manner.

iv. Street exposures with more than one type of sign must also comply with subsection 15.60.120.B.9.

23. Projecting Signs.

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34. Freestanding signs.

* * *

45. Awning signs.

* * *

56. Directional and incidental signs.

* * *

67. Signs on or accessory to automobile service stations and car washes. Signs on or accessory to automobile service stations and car washes shall conform to all regulations contained in this chapter and shall be limited to four signs per establishment. In computing the number of signs displayed, however, the following shall not be deemed to constitute signs on such premises:

* * *

78. Display case signs. Display case signs on those types of commercial establishments listed as allowed uses in (i) Section 17.46.010(E) Food Products Uses and (ii) Section 17.46.010(F) Food and Beverage Service Uses, of the Winnetka Zoning Ordinance, subject to the following limitations:

* * *

9. Street exposures. Street exposures with more than one type of sign must comply with the following additional requirements:

a. The total area of all window signs, wall signs, and awning signs shall not exceed 15 percent of the total area of street exposure. This provision shall not apply to exempt signs,

permitted directional signs, display case signs, and incidental signs.

b. In buildings with more than one commercial premises, the total area of all commercial wall signs, window signs, and awning signs on each premises shall not exceed 15 percent of the area of street exposure of each premises.

c. In cases where an occupant of a building occupied by two or fewer commercial premises does not have any street exposure, such occupants shall be permitted to display on or attach to the building, including on the doors and windows, one commercial sign provided that the area of the sign does not exceed five square feet. The area of the sign shall be included in the 15 percent limitation in subsection 15.60.120.B.2.9.a.”

SECTION 4: AMENDMENT TO SECTION 15.60.130 OF THE VILLAGE CODE.

Section 15.60.130, titled “General Standards,” of Chapter 15.60, titled “Signs,” of Title 15, titled “Buildings and Construction,” of the Village Code shall be amended to read as follows:

“Section 15.60.130 General standards.

All signs permitted by this chapter, whether with or without a permit, shall comply with the following standards:

A. Sign Measurement.

1. Area to Be Included. The supporting structure or bracing of a sign shall be omitted in measuring the area of the sign unless such structure or bracing is made part of the message or face of the sign. When a sign has more than one display face, all faces shall be included in determining the area of the sign; provided that, if the distance between the sign faces of a two-faced sign does not exceed ~~twelve (12)~~ inches, the area of the sign shall be measured as the area of one face.
2. Area of Sign With Background Panel. A sign placed or painted on a background panel shall be measured by computing the area of the background panel.
3. Area of Sign Without Background Panel. A sign with individual letters or symbols placed separately on a building wall, window, awning, or other structure without a background panel shall be measured as the sum of the area areas of the smallest regular

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geometric figures that can separately encompass all words, letter areas, figures, emblems, and other elements of the sign.

4. ~~Sign Spacing. No sign wording, illustration or element that is less than two feet from any other sign wording, illustration or element shall be considered a separate sign for purposes of calculating sign area.~~
54. Sign Height. The height of a sign shall be measured from the adjacent natural grade, to the highest point of the sign.

* * *

SECTION 5: AMENDMENT TO SECTION 15.60.150 OF THE VILLAGE CODE.

Section 15.60.150, titled “Certificate of Appropriateness,” of Chapter 15.60, titled “Signs,” of Title 15, titled “Buildings and Construction,” of the Village Code shall be amended to read as follows:

“Section 15.60.150 Certificate of appropriateness.

- A. Application for Preliminary Consideration. If requested in writing by a prospective applicant for a sign permit, the Board shall give preliminary consideration to a specific project before a formal application is filed, and shall provide recommendations on matters pertaining to the purpose, intent, standards and criteria of this chapter it may deem appropriate to guide the prospective applicant in developing a plan for signage that will comply with this chapter. The preliminary consideration is advisory only and no approval or denial shall be given during such preliminary consideration.
- B. Final Approval. Upon receipt of a complete application, the Board shall, as soon as practicable, consider whether a certificate of appropriateness should be issued. A certificate of appropriateness shall not be required for signs that are either exempt from this requirement or may be approved by the Director of Community Development or their designee pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter.

* * *

- F. Standards and Criteria for Issuance. The following factors and characteristics relating to the safety and appearance of signage, shall govern the ~~b~~Board's evaluation of design submittals:
 1. The sign area shall ~~not exceed the maximum permitted area and~~ shall be in proportion and scale to the building or to other buildings or signs in the surrounding area;

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2. A signage package for a business establishment that includes Projects which include a number of signs and graphics shall have an overall plan that demonstrates the compatibility of the design and colors of all the signs that are part of that package;
3. The amount of text and graphics information contained in or on any sign or group of signs shall be limited so that it results in a clear and readable design;
4. Signs and graphics shall have a harmonious relationship with nearby signs, buildings and the neighborhood, and shall be designed so as not to adversely affect adjacent structures. In this respect the sign shall ~~be related~~ relate to its building, structure and neighborhood in terms of size, shape, material, color, texture, lettering, location, arrangement, lighting, and the like;
5. Colors shall be used with restraint and excessive brightness shall be avoided;
6. ~~External lighting shall be arranged so that the light source is screened from view;~~
- ~~7.6.~~ The additional provisions of this chapter, as specified in this chapter, shall be part of the criteria of the design review process.”

SECTION 6: AMENDMENT TO SECTION 15.60.250 OF THE VILLAGE CODE.

Section 15.60.250, titled “Variations,” of Chapter 15.60, titled “Signs,” of Title 15, titled “Buildings and Construction,” of the Village Code shall be amended to read as follows:

“Section 15.60.250 Variations.

- A. Any person may apply to the Sign Board for a variation from the terms of this chapter and a permit to construct or alter or maintain any sign which does not conform to the requirements of this chapter.
- B. No variation application shall be accepted unless it is complete. Variation applications shall be made on forms provided by the Director. Variation application fees shall be set from time to time by resolution of the Village Council.
- C. ~~Variations shall be permitted only if:~~ In considering whether a variation should be granted, the Sign Board shall consider the following factors as may be applicable:
 1. ~~They are~~ The variations would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this chapter; ~~and~~

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2. ~~The plight of the petitioner is due to unusual circumstances; and~~ **Given the design elements of the building or site on which the sign will be located, the design of the sign is as compatible, if not more compatible, with character of the business district than the standard sign regulations would otherwise allow;**
 3. ~~There are practical difficulties or particular hardship in the way of carrying out the strict requirements of this chapter;~~ **For window signs, the design of the sign would not significantly inhibit the viewing of store products, activities, or services; and**
 4. The variation will not alter the essential character of the locality.;
 5. **The design of the sign is contextually appropriate for the type of business; and**
 - 6. The design of the sign exhibits a high degree of artistic embellishment.**
- D. Every variation granted by the Sign Board shall be accompanied by findings and facts specifying the reasons for granting the variation.
- E. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the Sign Board shall not have the power to:
1. Permit signs that are prohibited ~~by Section 15.60.060 of this Code unless the Sign Board determines that the variation would allow a type of sign that:~~ **(i) has previously been used on the building on which the proposed sign is to be located; (ii) historically has been customarily used by the type of business requesting the prohibited sign type; or (iii) is a Sign painted directly on the wall of a building, fence, or similar structure and the proposed sign would not be detrimental to the aesthetics of the building, the structure, or the surrounding area;**
 2. Waive permit requirements;
 3. Permit signs which violate the safety and maintenance provisions of Section 15.60.130;
 4. Vary the nonconforming sign provisions of Section 15.60.150**200** as applied to any given sign.”

SECTION 7: AMENDMENT TO THE DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES. Section VII Articulation, Subsection c. - Building Signs of the Village’s Design Review Guidelines are amended in the manner set forth in **Exhibit A** attached hereto and incorporated herein.

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SECTION 8: SEVERABILITY. If any provision of this Ordinance or part thereof is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this Ordinance shall remain in full force and effect, and shall be interpreted, applied, and enforced so as to achieve, as near as may be, the purpose and intent of this Ordinance to the greatest extent permitted by applicable law.

SECTION 9: EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance will be in full force and effect upon its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED this 3 of January, 2023, pursuant to the following roll call vote:


AYES: Trustees Apatoff, Dalman, Dearborn, Cripe, Handler, and Swierk

NAYS: _____

ABSENT: _____

APPROVED this 17 day of January, 2023.

Signed:



Village President

Countersigned:



Village Clerk

Published by authority of the
President and Board of Trustees of
the Village of Winnetka, Illinois,
this 18 day of January,
2023.

Introduced: January 3, 2023

Passed and Approved: January 17, 2023

January 3, 2023

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MC-01-2023

EXHIBIT A
AMENDMENTS TO DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

d. Building Signage

Commercial signs should reflect the character of the building style, while expressing each store's individuality. There are several prominent sign styles that are appropriate to Winnetka: surface mounted, pin-mounted, interior, decal and projecting blade signs. Sign materials are limited to painted wood, canvas, architectural glass and metal. Sign color must harmonize with the building upon which it is mounted and adjacent structures. ~~Background colors for the body of the sign are limited to earth tones and primary colors, whereas pastels, neon and secondary colors are not allowed.~~ Lettering color can be unique to the image of the retailer/user. Metal sign and plaque material such as brushed bronze, antique bronze, aluminum, stainless steel and painted cast iron or similarly appearing materials are preferred. Highly reflective metallic signs are not allowed. Signs should be lit by marquee or spot lighting; neon lighting is not permitted. Spot lighting should be minimal and unobtrusive and, per the Village Code, the source of illumination shall not be visible from any street, sidewalk or dwelling. Simplified industrial light fixtures are not permitted. Contextual solutions are recommended. The majority of the signs will be mounted within the building's sign band, defined as the wall area located above the ground floor storefront opening and below the second floor windowsill, and is located a minimum of 8'-0" above grade and a maximum of 15'-0" above grade.

Signs must comply with the general provisions of the Winnetka Sign Ordinance as well as design provisions contained within these Design Guidelines.

1. Surface mounted commercial signs are either fabricated from painted wood or cast metal plaques and are to be mounted within the sign band or within the storefront transom. The height of the sign is restricted to 75% of the area of the sign band or 14 inches - whichever is less. The sign band of a building consists of the area located above the ground floor storefront opening and below the second floor windowsill, and is located a minimum of 8'-0" and a maximum of 15'-0" above grade. Refer to figures 28, 29, and 30 for location. Surface mounted or pin-mounted signs are not permitted on secondary elevations without a defined sign band.
2. Pin-mounted commercial signs consist of reverse channel, cast metal and flat cut metal letters mounted above the storefront in the masonry sign band or suspended in front of the storefront at the transom or recessed entry. The size of the lettering is restricted so that the height of the letters does not exceed 75% of the height of the sign band or 14 inches - whichever is less. The length of the lettering is to be contained within 75% of the length of the sign band. (See figure 38)



Figure 38

3. ~~Interior signs floating independently are set behind the glass either at the transom or at the sill of the storefront and are lit from a separate source. This sign must adhere to the size limitations of the decal signs. (See figure 39)~~

4. ~~Decal Signs are defined as painted or vinyl transfer letters and numbers. Decal signs can be mounted within the transom and at the lower section of the storefront window area so as not to interfere with the merchandising. The decal sign area at the lower section of the window can occupy up to 10% of the glass area of a single pane. Decals mounted at the transom are restricted to 50% of the area of the transom. Decals located at the lower section of the main display area are to be limited to 6" in height unless they contain store operation hours, which are restricted to 2". (See figure 40)~~

Figure 39



Figure 40

5. Projecting blade commercial signs can be round, square or vertical, mounted from the face of the building at the second floor level between the windows or at the head of the storefront and are oriented to pedestrian scale. The signs are to be mounted on fixed hardware; no swinging or chain-mounted signs are allowed. The dimensions of the sign are not to exceed 6 square feet (36" high and 24" deep) (See figure 41). If illuminated, the signs should be lit with an unobtrusive light source.



Figure 41

6. Incidental wall signs such as building management identification and directory signs should be integrated into a single sign and be constructed of brushed bronze, antique bronze or painted cast iron. Such signs should not be placed on the prominent street front facade and should be directed to public residential entries.