



Legislation Text

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**Sidewalk Signs** - For the purpose of authorizing the Director of Planning and Zoning to revoke or suspend a sign permit approval in certain circumstances; and providing for a delayed effective date of the sidewalk sign permit fee.

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
City of Annapolis**

**Ordinance 30-19**

**Introduced by: Alderwoman Tierney and Alderman Rodriguez**

**AN ORDINANCE** concerning

**Sidewalk Signs**

**FOR** the purpose of authorizing the Director of Planning and Zoning to revoke or suspend a sign permit approval in certain circumstances; and providing for a delayed effective date of the sidewalk sign permit fee.

**BY** repealing and re-enacting with amendments the following portions of the Code of the City of Annapolis, 2019 Edition  
Section 21.70.050

**SECTION I: BE IT ESTABLISHED AND ORDAINED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the Code of the City of Annapolis shall be amended to read as follows:

**TITLE 21 - PLANNING AND ZONING**

**Chapter 21.70 - Sign Regulations.**

**Section 21.70.050 - Standards applicable to all signs.**

The following standards apply to all signs whether exempt or permitted:

- A. Condition and Appearance. All signs shall be maintained in good condition and appearance.
- B. Computations of Area and Height.
  - 1. Area.
    - a. The area of a sign face (which is also the sign area of a wall sign or other sign with only one face) shall be computed by means of the smallest square, circle, rectangle, triangle, or combination thereof that will encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the

background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, but not including any supporting framework, bracing, or decorative fence or wall when such fence or wall otherwise meets the zoning regulations in this title and is clearly incidental to the display itself.

- b. The sign area for a sign with more than one face shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces.
2. Height. The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Normal grade shall be construed to be the lower of: (1) existing grade prior to construction or (2) the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding, or excavating solely for the purpose of locating the sign. In cases in which the normal grade cannot reasonably be determined, sign height shall be computed on the assumption that the elevation of the normal grade at the base of the sign is equal to the elevation of the nearest point of the crown of a public street or the grade of the land at the principal entrance to the principal structure on the zoning lot, whichever is lower.
- C. Sight Visibility.
  1. No sign shall obstruct a clear view to and from traffic along any street right-of-way, entrance or exit.
  2. A sight visibility triangle, as defined in Division VI, shall be kept free of obstructions to vision between the heights of two and one-half feet and twelve feet above the street. If, in the opinion of the Director of Planning and Zoning with the concurrence of the Director of Public Works, there are unusual circumstances, these dimensions may be altered to enhance public safety.
- D. Integrated Sign Program. An integrated sign program, as defined in Division VI, is required for all commercial office complexes, shopping centers, and multi-tenant facilities. The establishment of an integrated sign program for existing developments is strongly encouraged.
- E. Design. The design of signs is important to the character of the City of Annapolis. The following provisions are designed to give guidance to persons designing, erecting, and approving signs in the City.
  1. Guidelines for All Signs.
    - a. Materials, colors and shapes of proposed signs shall be compatible with the related building (s). Size and proportions should be judged by sizes and proportions of signs on nearby properties that are compatible with the prevailing character, or the character prescribed in land use plans adopted by the City Council.
    - b. Every sign shall be designed as an integral architectural element of the building and site to which it principally relates.
    - c. The number of graphic elements on a sign shall be held to the minimum needed to convey the sign's major message and shall be composed in proportion to the area of the sign face.
    - d. Each sign shall be compatible with signs on adjoining premises and shall not compete for attention.
    - e. Signs should be constructed of quality materials. The choice of materials for signage should relate to the quality of architecture within the zoning district.
    - f. Signs should provide information, character and a quality image.
  2. MX and BR Districts, Additional Guidelines.
    - a. Signs generally shall be of simple design and relate to the scale and design of buildings.
    - b. The size of each sign shall relate to the scale and architectural character of its façade.
    - c. The placement of signs shall not cover attractive architectural details, overwhelm the façade in size, or interrupt the rhythm of upper façade windows.
    - d. The choice of materials for signs shall relate to the quality of historic architecture within the MX district. The use of painted wood, glass and metal are appropriate.

3. Historic District - Refer to Section 21.70.090 "Signs in the Historic District" for guidelines.
- F. Removal of Signs. Any sign associated with an activity on a vacated premises shall be removed from the premises, altered or resurfaced within one month from the time such activity ceases so that the sign does not display visual communication pertaining to the former activity.
- G. Sidewalk signs. Additional standards.
  1. Sidewalk signs shall not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic or visibility, or adversely affect the safety of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
  2. Sidewalk signs shall be placed on the sidewalk immediately adjacent to a permit holder's building and allow a 40-inch minimum WALKABLE pedestrian right-of-way. The exact location of the sign shall be determined by the Department of Public Works based on governmental accessibility and safety standards, including, but not limited to, the location and proximity of doorways; the distance between pedestrian obstacles; the location of crosswalks; and other physical features of the location that affect accessibility and safety.
  3. Sidewalk signs shall not be permanently affixed or anchored to the sidewalk or attached to structures.
  4. Sidewalk signs shall be removed from the public right-of-way from dusk to dawn and when the permit holder's business is closed
  5. No part of a sidewalk sign shall encroach upon any part of the sidewalk frontage of any adjacent premises, alley, or other such right-of-way.
  6. The applicant shall fully ensure that the placement of a sidewalk sign shall not cause any unnecessary or unreasonable exposure to personal injury or property damage to the public.
  7. The permit holder shall fully indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City and its agents, employees, and elected officials from and against any and all claims and damages in any way arising out of or through the acts or omissions of the permit holder in connection with the placement or use of the sidewalk sign.
  8. Before a permit is issued, the applicant shall provide an indemnity bond to ensure compliance with all applicable City laws and to cover losses and claims resulting from the placement or use of the sidewalk sign. The bond shall be in a form satisfactory to the City Attorney.
  9. AN APPROVED SIGN PERMIT FOR A SIDEWALK SIGN MAY BE REVOKED OR SUSPENDED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ZONING IF IT IS DETERMINED AFTER THE ISSUANCE OF THE PERMIT THAT THE SIGN IS OBSTRUCTING PEDESTRIAN OR VEHICULAR TRAFFIC, VISIBILITY, OR SAFETY.

**SECTION II: AND BE IT FURTHER ESTABLISHED AND ORDAINED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that the sidewalk sign permit fee shall be waived for 180 days commencing upon the adoption of Ordinance 42-18.

**SECTION III: AND BE IT FURTHER ESTABLISHED AND ORDAINED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL** that this ordinance shall become effective upon the date of its adoption.

**Explanation:**

UPPERCASE indicates matter added to existing law  
~~Strikethrough~~ indicates matter stricken from existing law.  
Underlining indicates matter added to existing law.