

city of saint paul  
planning commission resolution  
file number 11-15  
date March 4, 2011

WHEREAS, the City Council requested that the Planning Commission study zoning standards and regulations pertaining to measurement of double-faced and V-shaped sign area, permitted sign illumination level, regulation of window signs, number and size of exterior banners, and permitted exemptions for signs of city, county, state, and federal governments that provide public information; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the study and draft regulations pertaining to these sign regulation issues on April 23, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the current provision in Chapter 64, Signs, of the Zoning Code pertaining to measurement of double-faced and V-shaped sign area is in accord with what most communities do; and

WHEREAS, the current standard for maximum permitted light trespass (for all types of lighting, including signs) is 3.0 footcandles measured at the residence district boundary; and

WHEREAS, A 0.5 footcandle above ambient light level standard for illumination of signs in residential districts is commonly used in other cities; and

WHEREAS, the cost of administering and enforcing a standard that would make a large number of existing business signs nonconforming, including tracking legal nonconforming status, needs to be weighed against the benefit of a new standard; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 64, Signs, does not currently regulate signs inside of buildings; and

WHEREAS, new regulation of interior window signs would create added costs for businesses, particularly small neighborhood businesses that use window signs as an inexpensive way to attract customers, and would be difficult and costly to administer and enforce relative to the benefit; and

WHEREAS, adding provisions for window signs to the downtown area special district sign plan like those in the Grand Avenue special district sign plan may be a more appropriate way to address concerns about downtown window signs than creating new city-wide window sign regulations; and

WHEREAS, the definition of "*sign with dynamic display*" should be amended to make it clear that simply being able to turn an electric sign on and off does not make it a sign with dynamic display; and

WHEREAS, amending regulations pertaining to banner signs would have implications for other temporary signage, and the Zoning Code would benefit from a study that would consider amendments regarding banner signs within the context of all temporary signs; and

WHEREAS, Sec. 64.204, Exemptions, should be amended to make it clear that signs of the city, county, state, and federal government and subdivisions and agencies thereof which give orientation, direction or traffic-control information are exempt from permits and other requirements of Chapter 64;

moved by Wencil  
seconded by \_\_\_\_\_  
in favor Unanimous  
against \_\_\_\_\_

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission recommends that the City Council amend Chapter 64, Signs, of the Zoning Code as follows:

**Sec. 64.121. S.**

*Sign with dynamic display.* Any sign capable of displaying words, symbols, figures or images that can be electronically or mechanically moved or changed by remote, automatic, or electronic means, but not including being turned on and off. Signs providing only time and/or temperature information are not considered to be signs with dynamic display for regulatory purposes.

**Sec. 64.203. Permits.**

A permit shall be required for all exterior signs visible from a public right-of-way.

- (a) *Application.* Applications for sign and/or sign structure permits shall be submitted to the zoning administrator. Each application shall contain . . .

**Sec. 64.204. Exemptions.**

(a) Signs of the city, county, state, and federal government and subdivisions and agencies thereof which give orientation, direction or traffic-control information shall be exempt from the requirements of this chapter.

(b) The following signs shall not require a permit. These exemptions shall not be construed as relieving the owner of the sign from the responsibility of its erection and maintenance, and its compliance with the provisions of this chapter or any other law or ordinance regulating the same.

(1a) The changing of the message on the display surface of signs that are designed to have changeable copy.

(2b) Signs six (6) square feet or less in ~~size~~ area.

(3e) Lettering on motor vehicles when not utilized as a parked or stationary outdoor display sign.

(4d) Political signs.

(5e) Sports facility sponsorship signs.

**Sec. 64.401. All signs.**

No person shall place, erect or maintain a sign, nor shall a lessee or owner permit property under his control to be used for such a sign, which does not conform to the following requirements and without first obtaining the requisite permit for such sign. The following provisions shall apply in all zoning districts, ~~and to all exterior signs visible to the general public from a public right-of-way.~~

(a) No sign or sign structure shall . . .

(k) *Illumination.* Illuminated signs are permitted, except that flashing signs are prohibited. In residential districts, no sign may exceed a maximum illumination of 0.5 footcandle above ambient light level as measured fifty (50) feet from the sign's face.

~~(l) Signs of the city, county, state, and federal government and subdivisions and agencies thereof which give orientation, direction or traffic-control information shall be permitted in all zoning districts.~~

~~(m)~~ Only one side of a double-faced sign or V-shaped sign shall be used to compute the gross surface display area, display surface area or sign area of a sign.

~~(n)~~ Canopy signs that are parallel to the street shall be regulated as . . .

~~(o)~~ If a building will contain multiple uses, a comprehensive sign program shall . . .

~~(p)~~ Signs attached to buildings shall be positioned so . . .

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission informs the City Council that the following options for possible amendments were considered by the Neighborhood Planning Committee but not recommended:

Illumination – option for language not recommended.

The Neighborhood Planning Committee considered, but does not recommend adding the following sentence to Sec. 64.401(k): In all other districts, no sign may exceed a maximum illumination of 2.0 footcandles above ambient light level as measured fifty (50) feet from the sign’s face or the closest dwelling unit, whichever is farther.

Regulation of interior window signs – options for language not recommended.

The Neighborhood Planning Committee also considered, but does not recommend, extending sign regulations only to interior window signs with dynamic display, including the following amendments:

**Sec. 64.203. Permits.**

A permit shall be required for all exterior signs visible from a public right-of-way, and for all interior window signs with dynamic display that are within three (3) feet of a window and are oriented toward and visible from a public right-of-way.

- (a) *Application.* Applications for sign and/or sign structure permits shall be submitted to the zoning administrator. Each application shall contain . . .

**Sec. 64.204. Exemptions.**

(b) The following signs shall not require a permit. These exemptions shall not be construed as relieving the owner of the sign from the responsibility of its erection and maintenance, and its compliance with provisions of this chapter or any other law or ordinance regulating the same.

- (1a) The changing of the message on the display surface of signs that are designed to have changeable copy.
- (2b) Signs six (6) square feet or less in size area, except signs with dynamic display.
- (3) Signs with dynamic display two (2) square feet or less in area with only text providing only open/closed information.
- (4e) Lettering on motor vehicles when not utilized as a parked or stationary outdoor display sign.
- (5d) Political signs.
- (6e) Sports facility sponsorship signs.

**Sec. 64.401. All signs.**

No person shall place, erect or maintain a sign, nor shall a lessee or owner permit property under his control to be used for such a sign, which does not conform to the following requirements and without first obtaining the requisite permit for such sign. The following provisions shall apply in all zoning districts, ~~and to all exterior signs visible to the general public from a public right-of-way, and to all interior window signs with dynamic display that are within three (3) feet of a window and are oriented toward and visible from a public right-of-way.~~

**Sec. 64.405. Signs with dynamic display.**

The following provisions shall apply to exterior signs with dynamic display visible from a public right-of-way, and to interior window signs with dynamic display that are within three (3) feet of a window and are oriented toward and visible from a public right-of-way.

- (a) *Location and orientation.* Business signs with dynamic display shall . . .

**Sec. 64.503. TN1-TN3 traditional neighborhood and OS-BC business districts.**

(a) *Business and identification signs.*

- (6) Dynamic displays shall be monochromatic, shall not scroll or change their displays faster than every twenty (20) minutes, and shall be turned off between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. or after business hours, whichever is later. Interior window signs two (2) square feet or less in area with only text providing only open/closed information may have more than one color.

**Sec. 64.504. B2-B3 business and IR industrial districts.**

(a) *Business and identification signs.*

- (5) In the B2 district, dynamic displays shall be monochromatic if located within one hundred (100) feet of a residential use, measured from the sign to the nearest residential property line, shall not scroll or change their displays faster than every twenty (20) minutes, and shall be turned off between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. or after business hours, whichever is later; except that interior window signs two (2) square feet or less in area with only text providing only open/closed information may have more than one color.