

HIGHLAND VILLAGE SPECIAL DISTRICT SIGN PLAN

February 2013 draft amendments – strikeouts and underlines with notes

Intent and Purpose

The Highland Village Special District Sign Plan, as provided in ~~Section 66.216~~ Sections 64.601 and 64.750 of the Zoning Code, is intended to provide sign controls for ~~Highland Village which will make it an attractive place and build upon its unique character and identity.~~ The sign plan is intended to reduce sign clutter and to provide strong, clear identification of businesses. The sign plan provides a framework for signs so that the Village will have a consistent sign system, signs will fit in with the architecture of buildings, businesses are clearly and concisely identified, the image of the Village is made more memorable, and the pride businesses have for the area is enhanced. for the Highland Village commercial area with the following purpose:

- ☐ Strengthen and reinforce the image of the Highland Village commercial district as a unique quality shopping area by encouraging attractive, well-designed signs that complement the overall design of the district; do not clutter or detract from the appearance of the streetscape or the businesses; and do not overpower the design of buildings.
- ☐ Focus attention on the businesses at street level, with clear and concise business signs that support the pedestrian focus of the commercial district rather than being geared toward high-speed vehicular traffic.
- ☐ Keep window signs from blocking the view into businesses, allowing for passersby to see into the building in order to encourage sales and enhance the safety of employees and shoppers.

[A new purpose statement was crafted by the Highland Village Sign Plan Task Force]

Area Description

The Highland Village Special District Sign Plan shall apply to the area ~~designated on the accompanying map “Highland Village Sign District,” and described in section 9~~ along Ford Parkway between Mississippi River Boulevard and Snelling Avenue, and along Cleveland Avenue between Randolph Avenue and Villard Avenue, designated on the accompanying official zoning map of the “Highland Village Special Sign District.”

[The proposed area of the sign plan has changed. See map]

Interpretation and Definitions and Interpretation

The provisions of this Special District Sign Plan are supplementary to the provisions those of Chapter 646, Signs, of the Zoning Code, and the most restrictive provision shall apply. ~~The provisions of this Sign Plan which are more restrictive than provisions of Chapter 66 shall prevail and supersede the provisions of Chapter 66.~~ All words and terms shall be defined as in Chapter 646 of the Zoning Code of the City of St. Paul. ~~The word shall is mandatory; the word should is advisory.~~

[To clean up and clarify language]

Administration and Enforcement

The zoning administrator shall enforce the provisions of this Plan as a supplement to Chapter 64, Signs, of the Zoning Code. Whenever a permit for a sign in the Highland Village Special Sign District is required under the provisions of Chapter 64 of the Zoning Code, such permit shall not be issued unless the plans for the sign have been approved by the Zoning Administrator as in conformance with this Plan and Chapter 64, Signs.

The Zoning Administrator may order the removal of any sign that is not constructed or maintained in accordance with the provisions of this Special District Sign Plan under the provisions of Section 64.206(d) of the Zoning Code. Violations of this Special District Sign Plan are subject to the enforcement provisions of Chapter 61, Article IX, 61.900, Enforcement, of the Zoning Code.

Procedures

Applications for sign permits in the Highland Village Special Sign District shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator for review and approval according to the requirements of Zoning Code § 64.203(a) Application. The Zoning Administrator shall immediately notify the Highland District Council and the Highland Business Association. ~~The plans submitted to the zoning administrator shall be accompanied by plans of sufficient detail to demonstrate that the proposed sign complies with the provisions of this Plan and shall include at least the following:~~

- ~~1. A front elevation (front view) drawing of the sign drawn to scale. This can usually be obtained from the sign company, an architect or a graphic arts company. The minimum scale is one inch = one foot.~~
- ~~2. Either a front elevation drawing of the building with the proposed sign located on it (minimum scale 1/4 inch = 1 foot) or a photo of the building front.~~

~~3. A specification sheet describing sign materials, exact letter size, and type of lighting.~~

~~The Zoning Administrator shall review the plans within 30 days and notify the applicant of the decision to approve or disapprove the plans. Written reasons for denial shall accompany any decisions to disapprove the plans. Decisions by the Zoning Administrator may be appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals under the provisions of Section 61.701 of the Zoning Code.~~

~~A fee to cover the costs of the review shall be established by resolution of the City Council.~~

[Move this section here from the end of the document to make this more prominent, clear, and consistent with the organization of the Zoning code generally.]

Section 4

ADVERTISING SIGNS

~~Advertising signs shall not be permitted within the Highland Village Special Sign District. It is the goal of this sign plan to have the existing advertising signs removed within ten (10) years from the time of adoption of this plan. Ford Parkway, between vacated Prior Avenue and the Mississippi River Boulevard, has been the only designated city parkway exempted from a sign ordinance~~

~~regulation which prohibits advertising signs within 150 feet of parkways. In 1985, 388 trees were planted and landscaped medians, new road surfaces, decorative~~

~~pedestrian lights, and planters were constructed in the right-of-way of Ford Parkway, transforming it into a true parkway. Similar improvements, along with the removal of utility poles, were made in Cleveland Avenue. This was accomplished by a partnership between the businesses, residents and the city government. The visual clutter of advertising signs detracts from the aesthetic enjoyment of Ford Parkway, Cleveland Avenue, and the Highland Village business area.~~

~~Advertising signs add clutter to the Village and compete with the most important signs, signs which identify Village businesses. The purpose of advertising signs is to attract people's attention long enough to read the advertising message of the sign. Drivers of vehicles whose attention is on advertising signs rather than on the road can cause accidents. On average, between 12,650 and 15,500 vehicles a day travel on Ford Parkway; between 12,900 and 14,500 vehicles a day travel on Cleveland Avenue. Because of these large volumes of traffic, advertising signs, which distract drivers from traffic, are a traffic safety problem.~~

[Now, under § 64.420 of the Zoning Code, advertising signs are prohibited in all zoning districts city-wide. Therefore, this provision in the Highland Village Special District Sign Plan to prohibit advertising signs no longer has any significance, is unnecessary, and should be deleted.]

Business Signs

Business signs, signs that identify and direct attention to the business on the premises, play an important role in informing customers about the types and location of businesses in Highland Village. Business signs are necessary important for the viability-quality of Highland Village as a commercial area, contribute to its visual quality, district and are the signs that should be the most visible.

Signs on Buildings With Overhangs

~~Business signs on buildings with overhangs shall be subject to the following regulations:~~

- ~~—(1) Signs atop or along the surface of an overhang shall be parallel to the wall of the building;~~
- ~~—(2) One sign, six square feet or less in size, may be attached to the underside of the overhang at each entrance, provided the sign does not project closer than eight feet to the sidewalk. A predominant architectural feature of Village buildings, which help define its character, are overhangs projecting from the buildings over a public or private sidewalk.~~

~~The overhangs are in the form of canopies, either as extensions of the roof of a building or as projections from the wall of a building, or in the form of mansard roofs. The two buildings on the northwest and northeast corners of Ford Parkway and Cleveland have canopies which are extensions of the roof. The Highland Shopping Center, on the southeast corner of Ford Parkway and Cleveland, has a canopy which projects from the wall of the building. The building on the north side of Ford Parkway between Finn and Cretin, where Haskell's is a tenant, has a mansard roof.~~

~~Many of the buildings have a sign system consisting of one or more of the following signs: (1) signs atop or along the surface of the overhang and parallel to the wall of the building; (2) small signs attached to the underside of the overhang and perpendicular to the wall of the building; (3) wall signs; and (4) window signs. Signs atop overhangs serve three purposes: they emphasize and harmonize with the horizontal lines of the buildings; they create a common sign band along the building; and they screen from passers by unsightly chimneys, compressors and vents which are on top of some of the buildings. Signs attached to the underside of the overhang help pedestrians identify stores and, since they are small, do not add to sign clutter. Wall signs are effective for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic; window signs are most effective for pedestrians. This sign system, using all or a~~

~~combination of such signs, shall be used in the Village for all buildings with overhangs. Signs on overhangs (except small signs attached to the underside) which are not parallel to the wall of the building and signs which project from a wall or overhang de-emphasize and counter the horizontal lines of the buildings, can obstruct the view of nearby signs, and cause sign clutter.~~

Wall Signs

~~Wall signs shall cover neither windows nor architectural trim and detail. Wall signs located on the bands of building facades: over the entry, over windows, or between windows.~~

~~Signs painted directly on the wall of a building shall not be permitted. Signs painted directly on the wall of a building defaces the building. Tenants may move and a painted wall sign may be left to mis-identify a new tenant of a building or peel and become unsightly.~~

[The provisions already exist in Section 64.401]

Signs that advertise a product and include the name of the business on the premises upon which the sign is placed shall not be permitted. Such signs, which are often provided by product suppliers, fail to highlight the important information, the business name, and clutter the appearance of the street.

Business signs may take the form of freestanding signs, portable signs, projecting signs, temporary signs, wall signs and window signs. The location of business signs oriented to vehicular traffic should be coordinated to make them easier to find and read. The sum of the gross surface display area in square feet of all permanent business signs (not including temporary, portable and interior window signs) on a lot shall not exceed ~~one (1)~~ one and one half (1.5) times the lineal feet of lot frontage or seventy-five (75) square feet, whichever is greater.

[Changes to this paragraph reduce the amount of business sign area allowed in BC, B2 and B3 Business Districts within the Highland Village Sign District from “two (2) times the lineal feet of frontage or 75 sq. feet” to “one and one half (1.5) times the lineal feet of lot frontage or 75 sq. feet.” The proposed “one and one half (1.5) times the lineal front footage” standard is the same as for T Traditional Neighborhood and OS-B1 Business Districts.]

Sign materials shall be compatible with the original construction materials and architectural style of the building facade on or near which they are placed. Natural materials such as wood and metal are generally more appropriate than plastic. Externally lit signs are preferred.

[This standard, recommended by the task force, is the same as for T - Traditional Neighborhood and OS-B1 Business Districts.]

Signs with dynamic display are prohibited except for that portion of automobile service station signs that display the price of gas.

Freestanding Signs

There shall be no more than one freestanding sign per lot, and a freestanding sign shall be a minimum distance of forty (40) feet from any other freestanding sign. Freestanding signs shall be set back at least five (5) feet from all property lines and have a maximum gross surface display area of twenty four (24) square feet per side. The highest point on a freestanding sign shall be no more than twenty (20) feet above grade; if located within a required yard, it shall be no more than eight (8) feet above grade. Freestanding signs shall be stationary (may not revolve). Freestanding signs on a single pole shall be used only for businesses where the building is set back more than 25 feet from the street right-of-way. Sign illumination should be done in such a way that light spillover on adjacent properties is minimized.

Portable Signs

Portable signs shall be no more than forty-two (42) inches in height, and shall be regulated according to the requirements for portable signs in the T1-T4 Traditional Neighborhood and OS-BC Business Districts in Section 64.503(c) of the Zoning Code, with the exception that the total gross surface display area of portable signs on a zoning lot shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet.

[This new language limits the businesses for which a portable sign can be used and information that can be presented on portable signs. It also reduces the maximum gross surface display area of portable signs on lots with street frontage of over 330 feet from 300 sq. ft. to 36 sq. ft., the same as for lots with street frontage of less than 330 feet, and reduces the maximum height of portable signs from 6 ft. to 42 inches. Under § 64.503(c)(3), portable signs can not be located in the public right-of-way (including the public sidewalk) at all.]

Projecting Signs

A projecting sign is a sign, other than a wall sign, that projects from and is supported by a wall or building. With placement and spacing requirements, small, well-designed projecting symbolic or business name signs can complement a quality commercial area. Projecting symbolic or business name signs are permitted.

There shall be a minimum of thirty (30) feet of lot frontage per projecting sign, and a projecting sign shall be a minimum distance of thirty (30) feet from any other projecting sign. Care should be exercised in mounting so that signs are generally in the same height zone for ease in spotting but do not block each other out. A projecting sign shall not be located below a wall sign if it would obstruct the view of the wall sign.

Projecting signs shall have a maximum gross surface display area of sixteen (16) square feet per side, except that signs on marquees shall be permitted as

regulated in Section 64.418, Marquees, of the Zoning Code. The highest point on a projecting sign shall be no more than thirty (30) feet above grade.

[Language changes recommended by task force. Section moved here in order to be in alphabetical order]

Temporary Signs

Temporary signs shall be regulated according to the requirements for temporary signs in the T1-T4 Traditional Neighborhood and OS-BC Business Districts in Section 64.503(b) of the Zoning Code, with the exception that the total area of temporary freestanding and wall signs allowed under Section 64.503(b)(4) shall be a maximum of twenty-four (24) square feet. Pennants shall not be permitted in the district.

[This is new language pertaining to temporary signs recommended by the task force. For temporary signs in BC, B2 and B3 Business Districts in Highland Village, this new language reduces the maximum size of freestanding and wall real estate development signs from 100 sq. ft. to 50 sq. ft.; reduces the maximum size of real estate signs from 12 sq. ft. to 6 sq. ft.; reduces the maximum size of signs identifying an engineer, architect or contractor engaged in construction of a building from 100 sq. ft. to 4 sq. ft.; and reduces the maximum size of temporary freestanding and wall signs from 32 sq. ft. to 24 sq. feet.

Section moved here in order to be in alphabetical order]

Wall Signs

Wall signs should be located on the sign bands of building facades over the entry or display windows of a business. Wall signs shall cover neither windows nor architectural trim and detail.

Letters on wall signs shall be no more than eighteen (18) inches in height. Because wall signs are almost always seen from an angle, extended typefaces should be used. Viewing from an angle diminishes the apparent width and spacing of the letters.

The highest point on a wall sign shall be no more than thirty (30) feet above grade. Signs more than thirty (30) feet above the ground are out of the viewer's normal vision range and are of little value.

[Language changes as recommended by task force. Section moved here in order to be in alphabetical order]

Window Signs

Window Signs, Permanent

~~Permanent window signs painted on the surface of the window are permitted. Such signs can be as effective as wall signs but can be blocked from view by parked~~

~~vehicles. Window signs are most effective for pedestrian traffic and can give the most information. They are the last sign seen before entering a business, and pedestrians have time to read more detail.~~

~~Exterior w~~Window signs shall not exceed 10% of the store window glass area. The lettering of the business name should not exceed six inches in height. The lettering for other information should not exceed one inch in height. Letters with bright colors or gold are the most visible whatever the lighting conditions are inside or outside.

~~Window Signs, Temporary~~

~~Temporary window signs, affixed to the inside of a window of a building, are permitted. Temporary Interior wWindow signs shall be in place for not longer than 30 days and shall not exceed 20% of the store window glass area. The plastic box with slide-on letters type of window sign is unsightly, hard to read, and should be avoided.~~

~~Roof Signs~~

~~Roof signs are prohibited except those which are parallel to the wall of the building. Roof signs not parallel to the building are out of context with Village buildings. Roof signs should be used to match roof lines and unify the signbands of adjacent buildings.~~

~~Roof signs should be of such a design and height as to fit in with the architecture of the building but generally should not exceed three (3) feet in height.~~

[Delete roof signs because they are now prohibited in all zoning districts by § 64.414 in Chapter 64, Signs, of the Zoning Code. The Highland Village Special District Sign Plan is a supplement to Chapter 64, Signs, and the most restrictive provision applies.]

~~Pole Signs~~

~~Pole signs shall be used only for businesses where the building is set back more than 35 feet from the street right of way. No more than one pole sign per lot is allowed. When a pole sign projects over a public right of way more than eighteen (18) inches, the maximum gross surface display area of the projecting part of the sign shall be no more than fifteen (15) square feet. The highest point on a pole sign shall be no more than twenty (20) feet above grade. Pole signs shall be stationary (may not revolve), and should have as little structure as possible.~~

~~A pole sign can bring a business with a setback up to the street. Pole signs can be effective for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but they also can be a source of sign clutter.~~

~~Because pole signs are primarily viewed from vehicles, the message on pole signs should be concise to be effective. Bold type should be used with good contrast between the letters and the background.~~

[Pole signs are not defined by the zoning code and a recommendation for new language regarding Freestanding Signs was added earlier in the document.]

~~Ground Signs~~

~~Since signs which are parallel to a street will cause the least clutter, ground signs shall be parallel to the street. Ground signs, like pole signs, can bring a business up to the street, can be effective for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but can be a source of sign clutter. Ground signs are usually directed to vehicular traffic fairly close to the site and to pedestrians.~~

~~Marquees~~

~~Signs on marquees shall be as regulated in Section 66.202, Sub.II, of the Zoning Code.~~

~~Grouped Signs~~

~~Grouped signs should be used only to identify businesses that have no direct access from the sidewalk. The signs should be placed within a common framework.~~

~~Product Signs~~

~~No more than 10% of the gross surface display area of business signs permitted on a lot shall be used for product signs which are not integral to the name of the business. Product signs, a business sign which advertise a product sold on the premises, should be avoided. Such signs, which are often provided by soft drink, beer or cigarette companies fail to highlight the important information, the business name, and clutter the appearance of the Village.~~

~~Projecting Signs~~

~~Projecting signs shall not be permitted. Projecting signs tend to obstruct the view of other signs and are a major source of sign clutter.~~

~~Portable Signs and Pennants~~

~~Portable signs shall not be permitted in the Highland Village Sign District.~~

~~Portable signs, often attached to trailers but sometimes to motor vehicles, are often placed in parking lots, using valuable parking spaces, or in the maneuvering area,~~

~~making vehicular movement difficult. Sometimes they are placed on the sidewalk and boulevard blocking pedestrians. Many have flashing lights. Since they are not attached to the ground or a building, a passerby or the wind can move them.~~

~~Pennants shall not be permitted in the Highland Village Sign District. Pennants, triangular flags attached to strings, distracts attention from the important signs identifying businesses and adds to the sign clutter.~~

~~Wall Graphics~~

~~Wall graphics, a design painted on a wall but not advertising a business, should be avoided.~~

[This falls under the category of “advertising sign” and is now prohibited in all zoning districts]

~~Sign Legibility~~

~~Business signs should clearly and concisely identify the businesses on the premises. The name of the business should be highlighted; extra information tends to reduce the impact of the sign. In general, words and symbols should take no more than 40 percent of the total area of a sign. Signs with light letters on a dark background area are easier to spot on a busy street. Sign colors and materials should be compatible with the building and surrounding environment. To maximize the effect of the graphics, the number of colors should be minimal. Lighting of signs should be carefully considered; indirect and subdued lighting is preferred. There should be no more than 1 foot candle at 4 feet from the sign. Because signs are almost always seen from an angle, extended typefaces should be used. Viewing from an angle diminishes the apparent width and spacing of the letters. Bold type with light lettering on a dark background is recommended for maximum legibility.~~

[The language about illumination is addressed in 64.405. Signs with dynamic display which limits dynamic display signs to .3 foot candles above ambient light level as measured from fifty (50) feet from the signs face.]

~~Section 6~~

~~NON-CONFORMING SIGNS~~

~~Signs within the Highland Village Sign District which lawfully existed prior to the adoption of this Plan by the City Council, and which would be prohibited, regulated or restricted under the provisions of this Plan or amendments thereto, may continue to exist as legal nonconforming sign under the provisions of Section 66.300, nonconforming signs, of the Zoning Code.~~

[The language regarding provisions for legal nonconforming signs in this paragraph is also redundant, unnecessary, and should be deleted. The Highland Village Special District Sign Plan is a supplement to Chapter 64, Signs, of the Zoning Code and the detailed provisions and regulations for legal nonconforming

signs in § 64.301 apply to the Highland Village Special District Sign Plan. They should not be replicated here.]

~~Section 7~~

~~ADMINISTRATION and ENFORCEMENT~~

~~The zoning administrator shall enforce the provisions of this Plan as a supplement to Chapter 66, Signs, of the Zoning Code. Whenever a permit for a sign in the Highland Village Special Sign District is required under the provisions of Chapter 66 of the Zoning Code, such permit shall not be issued unless the plans for the sign have been approved by the Planning Administrator as in conformance with this Plan and by the Zoning Administrator as in compliance with Chapter 66, Signs.~~

~~Section 8~~

~~PROCEDURE~~

~~Applications for signs in the Highland Village Sign District shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator. The application shall be accompanied by four (4) copies of plans of sufficient detail to demonstrate that the proposed signs comply with provisions of this plan and shall include at least the following:~~

- ~~1. A front elevation (front view) drawing of the signs drawn to scale. This can usually be obtained from the sign company, an architect, or a graphic arts company. The minimum scale is one inch = one foot.~~
- ~~2. Either a front elevation drawing of the building drawn to scale with the proposed signs located on it (minimum scale 1/4 inch = 1 foot) or a photo of the building front.~~
- ~~3. A specification sheet describing sign materials, exact letter size, and type of lighting. A copy of the sign application and two (2) copies of the plans shall be referred to the Planning Administrator who shall have thirty (30) days in which to approve or disapprove the plans. The Planning Administrator shall notify the Zoning Administrator and the applicant of the decision to approve or deny the plans. Written reasons for denial will accompany a decision to deny the plans. Any decision of the Planning Administrator may be appealed to the Planning Commission.~~

~~A fee to cover the costs of the review shall be established by resolution of the City Council.~~

~~Section 9~~

~~AREA DESCRIPTION~~

~~The Highland Village Sign District is within the following described area: beginning at the intersection of the centerlines of Finn Street and Bayard Avenue thence south along the centerline of Finn Street to its intersection with the centerline of Pinehurst Avenue; thence west along the centerline of Pinehurst Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Mount Curve Boulevard; thence north along the centerline of Mount Curve Boulevard to its intersection with the centerline of Highland Parkway; thence west along the centerline of Highland Parkway to its intersection with the centerline of Mississippi River Boulevard; thence southerly along the centerline of the Mississippi River Boulevard to its intersection with a line 350 feet south of and parallel to the centerline of Ford Parkway; thence east along the line 350 feet south of and parallel to the centerline of Ford Parkway to its intersection with the extension of the centerline of Cretin Avenue; thence south along the centerline of Cretin Avenue 200 feet; thence east along a line parallel to Ford Parkway a distance of 648 feet; thence south along a line parallel to Cleveland Avenue 205 feet; thence east along a line parallel to Ford Parkway to its intersection with the centerline of Cleveland Avenue; thence north along the centerline of Cleveland Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Hillcrest Avenue; thence east along the centerline of Hillcrest Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Kenneth Avenue; thence north along the centerline of Kenneth Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Ford Parkway; thence east along the centerline of Ford Parkway to its intersection with the centerline of Howell Street; thence north along the centerline of Howell Street to its intersection with the centerline of Pinehurst Avenue; thence west along the centerline of Pinehurst Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Kenneth Avenue; thence north along the centerline of Kenneth Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Highland Parkway; thence west along the centerline of Highland Parkway to its intersection with the centerline of Wilder Street; thence north along the centerline of Wilder Street to its intersection with the centerline of Bayard Avenue; thence west along the centerline of Bayard Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Cleveland Avenue; thence north along the centerline of Cleveland Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Bayard Avenue; thence west along the centerline of Bayard Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of Finn Street, the point of beginning.~~

[Move to first page to make these sections more prominent, clear, and consistent with the organization of the Zoning Code generally.]