



City of Warrenton City Commission
Work Session Agenda
Tuesday, August 11, 2026 – 5:00 PM
City Hall, 225 S. Main, Warrenton, OR 97146

*****The meeting will be broadcast via Zoom at the following link*****

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5332386326?pwd=VHNVVXU5blkxbDZ2YmxlSWpha0dhUT09#success>

Meeting ID: 533 238 6326 | Passcode: 12345 | Dial-in Number: 253-215-8782

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Work Session Item(s)**
 - A. Discussion on Draft Sign Ordinance Revisions
- 4. Adjournment**

Warrenton City Hall is accessible to the disabled. An interpreter for the hearing impaired may be requested under the terms of ORS 192.630 by contacting Hanna Bentley, City Recorder, at 503-861-0823 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting so appropriate assistance can be provided.



TO: Planning Commission and City Commission

FROM: Anne Marie Skinner, AICP, Planning Director

DATE: August 3, 2026

RE: Joint Work Session – Sign Code Revisions

On January 6, 2023, Mayor Balensifer created a task force to review the current sign code. The task force automatically dissolved on June 27, 2023, but over the six-month course of its duration, the task force met several times and formed recommendations which were presented to City Commission on July 25, 2023. On that date, the City Commission unanimously voted to forward the sign code task force to the Planning Commission for further work and development. The available case file does not indicate whether the Planning Commission held any work sessions, meetings, or public hearings following the City Commission’s action on July 25, 2023. It is also unclear what transpired with the revisions to the sign code between July 25, 2023, and the commencement of my employment as Planning Director on May 1, 2026.

Preparation of a draft sign code amendment was identified as one of my highest priority assignments upon assuming the position of Planning Director. In response to that assignment, the attached draft was created for a joint discussion between the Planning Commission and City Commission. The draft was created using the 2015 United States Supreme Court landmark ruling in *Reed V. Town of Gilbert*, 576 U.S. 155, regarding content neutrality and which fundamentally altered how local governments can regulate signage, the sign code task force recommendations, a model sign code, Oregon Administrative Rules for signs in Oregon State Highway rights-of-way, and other content-neutral sign codes including Lincoln City and North Bend. The proposed amendments are intended to provide a constitutionally defensible sign code that is easier to administer and consistently enforce.

Under the *Reed* ruling, the Court established a strict standard for determining whether a sign code violates the First Amendment’s Free Speech Clause. Also under the *Reed* ruling, any sign regulation that is based on content on its face is presumptively unconstitutional. A content-based regulation is determined to be so if the code enforces different rules (such as varying size, height, duration, or permit requirements) based on the specific message, topic, or subject matter displayed on the sign. If a code enforcer must read the text of a sign to know which regulatory standard applies, then the rule is legally a content-based rule.

In *Reed*, the Town of Gilbert enforced a code that applied different structural limits to three distinct categories of noncommercial speech: “ideological signs,” “political signs,” and “temporary directional signs.” The Supreme Court struck down the code, ruling that these categorical distinctions triggered strict scrutiny—the highest level of judicial review. To survive strict scrutiny, a city must prove that its rules use the least restrictive means possible to serve a compelling governmental interest. The Court concluded that municipal interests, such as preserving local aesthetics or managing traffic safety, while legitimate government interests do not generally satisfy the compelling-interest standard required under strict scrutiny.

To comply with *Reed*, local governments must shift away from “functional” definitions (e.g., prohibiting or exempting signs by classifying them as “political,” “real estate,” “construction,” or “religious”). Instead, a constitutionally sound sign code must regulate speech through purely content-neutral mechanics. Municipalities may continue to enforce robust time, place, and manner restrictions, provided those limits are based entirely on objective, physical criteria such as:

- Type: Regulating signs by type (e.g., freestanding, attached, portable, electronic message center).
- Physical Metrics: Setting limits on maximum square footage, height, and illumination levels.
- Zoning: Establishing different sign allowances for different zoning districts (e.g., residential districts versus commercial districts versus industrial districts) rather than the sign’s message.

The proposed revisions have been drafted to align with this constitutional framework, replacing content-driven classifications with content-neutral standards, types, and definitions to align with the Supreme Court’s ruling and address the recommendations of the sign code task force all while remaining consistent with Oregon Department of Transportation rules regarding signs within state highway rights-of-way. The purpose of today’s work session is to obtain direction from the Planning Commission and City Commission prior to finalizing an ordinance for public hearing. The proposed revisions include:

- Content-neutral definitions and sign types, including a content-neutral definition for sign;
- Clear and objective standards for permanent signs with a simple sign permit requirement to ensure compliance;
- Clear and objective standards for enforcement;
- Provisions for nonconforming signs;
- List of items exempt from the sign permit requirements;
- List of prohibited items;
- Different size, area, height, and number allowances for permanent signs based on zoning districts; and
- Regulation of temporary signs under Title 9 Public Peace and Welfare.

Discussion items will include:

- Completing the **XXX highlighted** allowance determinations;
- Prohibition of external illumination, electronic message centers, and off-premises signs in the residential zones and the OSI, R-C, C-2, A-1, A-2, and A-3 zoning districts; and
- Internal and external illumination, electronic message centers, and off-premises signs allowed in the C-1, I-1, I-2, and CI zoning districts.

No public hearings have been scheduled. Staff anticipates that additional work sessions may be necessary before presenting a finalized ordinance for public hearing.

*City of Warrenton, OR
Monday, August 3, 2026*

Title 16. Development Code

Division 3. Design Standards

Chapter 16.144. SIGNS

§ 16.144.010. Purpose.

This section regulates size, location and illumination of signs with the interest of safeguarding and enhancing the City's economic well-being, traffic safety and visual environment.

§ 16.144.020. General Requirements.

The following general provisions shall govern all signs:

- A. Signs shall not extend into, over or upon any public street or right-of-way. A sign may extend over a public sidewalk provided the bottom of the sign structure shall be at least eight feet above the grade of the sidewalk and the sign does not project more than three feet into the public right-of-way. A highway directional or informational sign maintained and owned by the Oregon Department of Transportation may extend over a street right-of-way.
- B. Signs or sign supporting structures shall not be located so as to detract from a motorist's view of vehicular or pedestrian traffic or a traffic sign.
- C. All signs shall be designed and located so as to prevent the casting of glare or direct light from artificial illumination upon adjacent publicly dedicated streets, surrounding public or private streets, or surrounding public or private property.
- D. Sign area does not include foundation supports and other essential structures serving as a backdrop or border to the sign. Only one side of a double faced sign is counted in measuring the area of a sign.
- E. Signs shall not contain flashing, moving, rotating or otherwise animated parts.
- F. All signs together with their supporting structure shall be kept in good repair and maintenance.
- G. It is the responsibility of the property owner to remove any abandoned sign within 30 days of the cessation of its use.
- H. Murals painted directly upon exterior walls are not signs (not windows) and are exempt from this section. Murals must be professional-grade and maintained in accordance with the accepted practices of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades.
- I. Off-site signs shall be prohibited.

§ 16.144.030. Sign Requirements for R-40, R-10, R-M and R-H Zones.

Conditional uses may have one permanent nameplate sign with up to four square feet of sign area, placed on the exterior of the structure.

§ 16.144.040. Sign Requirements for C-1, C-MU, C-2, R-C, I-1, and I-2 Zones.

- A. Unless otherwise restricted elsewhere in this Code, permitted and conditional uses are permitted permanent signs with a cumulative area based on lineal feet of street frontage, up to a maximum of 400 square feet. For sites with more than one side of street frontage, signs based on the length of one site frontage may not be placed on another site frontage. Sites with frontage on Highway 101 are permitted up to two square feet of cumulative sign area per front foot. Except as otherwise restricted by this Code, all other commercial and industrial sites may have up to one square foot of cumulative sign area per lineal foot of street frontage.
- B. Unless otherwise restricted elsewhere in this Code, permitted and conditional uses shall have no more than 50 square feet of temporary sign space.
- C. No sign shall exceed 45 feet in height or extend higher than 10 feet above the height of the building to which it is attached or associated, whichever is less.
- D. Signs in commercial and industrial districts (C-1, C-2, C-MU, R-C, I-1, I-2) along Fort Stevens Highway/State Highway No. 104 (S. Main Avenue, N. Main Avenue, NW Warrenton Drive, and Pacific Drive) shall be limited to a cumulative of 32 square feet of sign area per commercial or industrial use. For sites with more than one side of street frontage, one additional sign (up to 32 square feet) may be provided.
- E. Scrolling electronic reader board signs are not allowed in the areas described in subsection **D** of this section.
- F. One professional-grade sandwich board, not taller than four feet in height, may be permitted for each commercial use provided that no less than six feet of unobstructed pedestrian corridor is maintained across the property at all times.
- G. Unless otherwise permitted by site design review or other City action, the total number of signs allowed per commercial or industrial use shall be two signs (i.e., one pole sign together with one projecting wall sign or one projecting wall sign together with one sandwich board sign, etc.). For sites with more than one side of street frontage, one additional sign (up to 32 square feet or based on lineal feet of street frontage, as applicable) may be provided.

§ 16.144.050. Aquatic Zone Sign Requirements.

Signs in aquatic zones (A-1, A-2, A-3) shall be limited to 32 square feet in size per aquatic use. Signs are not permitted in the A-5 zone. The Planning Commission may authorize additional sign requirements as part of the conditional use permit process.

16.12.010 Definitions.

A-Frame sign means a double-faced temporary sign composed of two sign boards attached at the top and separate at the bottom, not permanently attached to the ground.

Alter means to make a change to a sign or sign structure, including but not limited to, changes in area, height, projection, illumination, shape, materials, placement, location on a site, or replacement. Altering a sign does not include ordinary maintenance or repair, repainting an existing sign surface, including display changes in an electronic display center, or exchanging the display panels of a sign.

Animated sign means a sign that displays movement or the appearance of movement by mechanical, electrical, electronic, digital, or other means, excluding the static display changes of an electronic message center that comply with this chapter.

Attached sign means a permanent sign that is an awning sign, canopy sign, marquee sign, projecting sign, suspended sign, or wall sign, any of which may have an incorporated electronic message center if it is allowed in the applicable zone.

Athletic scoreboard means a permanent sign erected next to an athletic field by the owner or operator of the field, where the sign is visible to spectators.

Awning means a light roof-like structure, supported entirely by the exterior wall of a building; consisting of a fixed or movable frame covered with cloth, plastic, or metal; extending over doors, windows, and/or show windows, with the purpose of providing protection from sun and rain and/or embellishment of the façade.

Awning sign means a permanent attached sign affixed or attached to or placed upon an awning.

Balloon (inflatable) sign means a temporary sign consisting of a membrane that relies on internal gaseous pressure or a semi-rigid framework for maintaining its form.

Banner sign means a temporary sign made of fabric or other nonrigid material with no enclosing framework.

Beacon sign means any light with one or more beams directed into the atmosphere or directed at one or more points not on the same lot as the light source; also, any light with one or more beams that rotate or move.

Bench sign means a sign on an outdoor bench.

Billboard means a permanent freestanding, wall, or roof sign structure that features a sign face designed, intended, or used to display imagery or text, where the sign structure is made available to third parties by an owner or operator who receives compensation, lease payments, or other financial consideration for the display of such, or where the sign exceeds the maximum area, dimensions or height limits allowed for permanent or temporary signs within the applicable zoning district.

Canopy means a light roof-like structure, supported by the exterior wall of a building and on columns or wholly on columns, consisting of a fixed or movable frame covered with approved cloth, plastic, or metal, extending over entrance doorways only, with the purpose of providing protection from sun and rain and embellishment of the façade.

Canopy sign means a permanent attached sign affixed or attached to or placed upon a canopy.

Changeable copy sign means a sign whose message or display is changed only by physically replacing, rearranging, or repositioning letters, numbers, symbols, panels, or similar elements by hand and that does not utilize electronic, digital, or remote-controlled technology.

Component means any element of a sign or its source of support (excluding the building) including but not limited to support structure, accessories, wiring, or framing. Paint, vinyl, paper, fabric, lights, diodes, or plastic copy panels on a sign do not constitute components.

Electronic message center means a permanent sign, incorporated into a permanent attached or freestanding sign, that uses electronic, digital, or mechanical technology, including light-emitting diodes (LEDs), incandescent bulbs, liquid crystal displays (LCDs), or magnetized flipping devices to display messages, images, or other content that can be changed by electronic, digital, mechanical, remote, or automatic means.

Flag means any fabric, bunting, or other lightweight material that is secured or mounted to allow movement caused by the atmosphere.

Flashing or blinking sign means when used in describing a sign the presence of an intermittent or flashing light source (whether on the face or externally mounted), a sign that has the presence of a flashing or blinking light source (whether on the face or externally mounted), or the presence of a light source which creates the illusion of intermittent or flashing or blinking light by means of animation.

Foot-candle means an English unit of measurement of the amount of light falling upon a surface. One foot-candle is equal to one lumen per square foot. Foot-candles are measured by means of an illuminance meter.

Freestanding sign means a permanent sign that is a ground-mounted, monument, or pole sign, any of which may incorporate an electronic message center if it is allowed by the applicable zone, wholly supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in, the ground and that is independent of and detached from any building or other structure, whether portable or stationary.

Government sign means a sign that is constructed, placed, attached, affixed, installed, erected, or maintained by the federal, state, county, or city government for the purpose of carrying out an official duty or responsibility, or a sign that is required to be constructed, placed, attached, affixed, installed, erected, or maintained by the federal, state, county, or city government to enforce a property owner's rights.

Grave marker means a sign on a cemetery plot or space, including any floral displays or other decorations placed upon it.

Ground-mounted sign means a permanent freestanding sign that is permanently supported by posts, columns, or similar structural members that are permanently anchored in the ground and where the bottom of the sign face is located close to grade.

Handheld sign means a hand-carried sign worn or carried by a person when being displayed.

Historic or landmark marker means a sign constructed close to or on a historic place, object, building, or other landmark recognized by an official historical resource entity, where the sign is constructed by either the owner of the historic property and does not exceed 40 square feet in sign area.

Illuminance means the amount of light falling upon a real or imaginary surface at a given distance, commonly called “light level” or “illumination.”

Illuminated sign means a sign characterized by using artificial light, either projecting through its surface(s) as internally or transilluminated; or reflecting off its surface(s) as externally illuminated. The illumination is “external” when the light source is separate from the sign and is directed to shine upon the sign and “internal” when the light source is contained within the sign.

Incidental sign means a sign not exceeding three feet in height and four square feet in sign area per sign face, with no more than two sign faces, located entirely on the site it serves, intended solely to facilitate the safe, orderly, and efficient movement or navigation of vehicles or pedestrians on the property.

Indirect means, when describing the illumination of a sign, external illumination from a source located away from the sign, which lights the sign, but which is itself not visible to people viewing the sign from any right-of-way or adjacent property.

Integral sign means a sign that is embedded, extruded, or carved into the material of a building façade and projecting no more than two inches from a building, made of noncombustible material (such as bronze, brushed stainless steel, aluminum, or similar).

Lawn sign means a temporary sign made of lightweight materials such as cardboard or vinyl that is supported by a lightweight frame placed directly in or upon the ground without other support or anchor.

LED means a semiconductor diode that converts applied voltage to light and is used in digital displays.

Marquee means a permanent roofed structure attached to and supported entirely by a building; no part of which shall be used for occupancy or storage; with the purpose of providing protection from sun and rain or embellishment of the façade.

Marquee sign means a permanent attached sign affixed or attached to or placed upon a marquee.

Menu board means a sign placed at the beginning of a drive-up service lane of an establishment that includes a two-way speaker system for communication between occupants of a vehicle and staff within the establishment.

Monument sign means a permanent freestanding sign in which the sign face is integrated into a solid base or pedestal that extends continuously from grade to the bottom of the sign face.

Name plate means a sign located on the front façade of a residential structure, no larger than four square feet in sign area.

Neat, clean, and in good repair means the following in reference to signs and sign structures: “Neat” means without rotting or broken parts; having parts that are solid and sound, without chipping or peeling paint, paper, vinyl or plastic; without graffiti; and without faded, washed-out, or illegible displays. “Clean” means free of dirt, unsoiled, without grime or soot, but does not include minor dust coating that is undetected from the main traveled way of public right-of-way. “Good repair” means having sound and solid parts, without rotting or broken parts, firmly fixed in place.

Nonconforming sign means any permanent sign which lawfully exists prior to the effective date of the most recent ordinance codified in Chapter 16.144 but which, due to the requirements herein, no longer complies with the area, height, or placement regulations or other provisions of Chapter 16.144.

Off-premises sign means a sign that displays any message directing attention to a business, product, service, profession, commodity, activity, event, person, institution, or other message, which is generally conducted, sold, manufactured, produced, offered, or occurs elsewhere than on the premises where the sign is located.

Original art mural means a hand-produced work of visual art that is tiled or painted by hand directly upon, or affixed directly to, an exterior wall of a building or structure. Original art murals are NOT computer-generated graphics, mechanically produced prints, or digitally printed vinyl wraps.

Permanent sign means a sign permanently and directly attached by means of screws, nuts, bolts, anchors, or similar, or affixed directly, to a permanent, fixed, not movable, nonportable supporting structure. Permanent signs are attached signs (awning, canopy, marquee, projecting, suspended, and wall) and freestanding signs (ground-mounted, monument, and pole).

Pole sign means a permanent freestanding sign that is permanently supported in a fixed location by a structure of one or more poles, posts, pylons, uprights, or braces from the ground.

Portable sign means a temporary sign which is not affixed to a building, other structure, or the ground in a permanent manner and designed to be moved from place to place.

Projecting sign means a permanent attached sign, other than a wall sign, that projects from, and is supported by or attached to, an awning, canopy, marquee, or wall of a building or structure.

Repair means, when referencing sign repair, mending or replacing broken or worn parts or elements with comparable (like for like) materials and like dimensions while retaining all existing dimensions as well as all sound parts and elements.

Replace means, when referencing sign replacement, to substitute a sign, sign structure, or major component thereof with one that is not like-for-like.

Roof sign means a sign erected upon, against, over, or above the roof of any building or structure or a sign placed directly on the roof such as a painted sign where the painting takes place directly on the surface of the roof.

Sign means any display, illustration, structure, or device that has a visual display where any portion of said visual display is visible from any right-of-way and is designed to identify, announce, direct, or inform. The scope of the term “sign” does not depend on the content of the message or image being conveyed.

Sign face means the surface or area of a sign upon which copy, graphics, symbols, logos, or other display elements are placed or displayed.

Sign structure means any structure that supports, has supported, or can support a sign.

Suspended sign means a permanent sign suspended from the underside of an awning, canopy, eve, or marquee.

Temporary sign means a sign that, based upon the sign’s materials (e.g., light fabric, cardboard, wallboard, plywood, paper, other light materials), location, or means of construction, with or without a frame, is intended or designed to be displayed for a limited time. Temporary signs are A-frame signs, banner signs, flags, lawn signs, and portable signs.

Unlawful sign means a sign or sign structure that does not conform to the provisions of the municipal code and is not a nonconforming sign.

Utility sign means a sign constructed or placed by a utility on or adjacent to a pole, pipe, vault, substation, box, or pump of the utility.

Vehicle sign means a sign on or attached to a motor vehicle, truck, trailer, van, bus, railroad, car, light rail car, or similar.

Video sign means a sign providing a display in both a horizontal and vertical format (as opposed to linear), through use of pixel and subpixel technology having the capacity to create continuously changing displays in a full spectrum of colors and light intensities.

Wall sign means a permanent attached sign that is affixed parallel with the wall, painted or printed on the wall, or is affixed flat against the sloping surface of the wall.

Window sign means a sign applied, printed, painted, attached, or affixed to the interior or exterior of a window.

CHAPTER 16.144 SIGNS

16.144.010. Purposes.

A. The purposes of this chapter are to:

1. Regulate permanent signs in a manner that does not create a conflict with statutory, administrative, or constitutional standards, or impose an undue financial burden on the City;
2. Provide for clear, objective, and consistent enforcement of the regulations set forth herein under the zoning authority of the City;
3. Maintain, enhance, and improve the aesthetic environment of the City by preventing visual clutter that is harmful to the appearance of the community;
4. Regulate the number, location, size, type, illumination, and other physical characteristics of permanent signs within the City to promote public health, safety, and welfare;
5. Ensure that the allowances for permanent signs are compatible with land use districts;
6. Provide for safe construction, location, erection, and maintenance of permanent signs or permanent sign structures; and
7. Ensure that the constitutionally guaranteed right of free expression is protected.

16.144.020. Sign permit application.

- A. Except as provided in WMC Section 16.144.025, a sign permit issued by the Planning Department shall be obtained prior to, or in conjunction with, applying for a structural sign permit with the Building Department and prior to erecting, constructing, placing, locating, attaching, affixing, moving, modifying, or altering any permanent sign or any permanent sign structure.
- B. An application for a sign permit shall be made on a form prescribed by the Planning Director, shall contain all the information requested on the prescribed form, and shall be filed with the Planning Department.
- C. A separate sign permit application is required for each separate permanent sign or permanent sign structure.
- D. Payment of the sign permit application fee in the amount set by City Commission resolution is required for each separate sign permit application.
- E. A separate structural sign permit application through the Building Department is required for each separate permanent sign or permanent sign structure as required by the building code.
- F. A separate application through Clatsop County for an electrical permit is required for illumination.

16.144.025. Exemptions.

The following items are exempt from the sign permit requirements and number, area,

and height allowances of this chapter but remain subject to all other applicable provisions of the Warrenton Municipal Code, including the definitions of WMC 16.12.010 and the placement requirements of WMC 16.144.035, unless specifically exempted. An exemption from the sign permit requirement of this chapter does not exempt items from any required structural, electrical, or other applicable permits.

- A. Athletic scoreboards;
- B. Bench signs;
- C. Changing a sign face, provided no changes are made to the cabinet or other structural components of the sign and provided that no changes or repairs are made to illumination.
- D. Display changes on electronic message centers;
- E. Government signs;
- F. Grave markers;
- G. Handheld signs;
- H. Historic or landmark markers;
- I. Incidental signs, as defined in this chapter, not exceeding two signs at each vehicle driveway and one sign at each pedestrian building entrance;
- J. Integral signs;
- K. Menu boards;
- L. Name plates;
- M. Original art murals;
- N. Painting, repainting, cleaning, and routine maintenance of an existing permanent sign or permanent sign structure that does not alter the sign area, size, height, location, structural components, illumination, or supporting structure of the sign.
- O. Signs displayed upon a bus or vehicle owned by a public transit district or government agency;
- P. Signs incorporated into ATMs, fuel pumps, or vending machines;
- Q. Temporary signs under WMC 9.20;
- R. Utility signs;
- S. Vehicle signs that are not prohibited under WMC 16.144.060; and
- T. Window signs, internally or externally illuminated, either directly or indirectly, provided such illumination is not otherwise expressly prohibited by the underlying regulations under WMC 16.144.090.

16.144.030. Construction.

- A. All permanent signs and permanent sign structures, including exempt signs and other items identified in WMC 16.144.025, shall comply with all applicable City, county, state, and federal construction codes, regulations, and permit requirements.
- B. All applicable permits shall be obtained as required by City, county, state, or federal law and shall be obtained prior to construction or placement.
- C. The property owner and applicant shall be responsible for obtaining all permits required by this chapter and by applicable City, county, state, and federal laws before constructing or placing a permanent sign or permanent sign structure.

16.144.035. Placement requirements.

- A. Placement is subject to compliance with clear-vision area requirements of WMC Chapter 16.132.
- B. Signs and sign placement shall comply with the applicable accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- C. No sign or sign structure shall reduce the minimum pedestrian clear width required by the ADA or obstruct lawful vehicle or bicycle travel.
- D. No portion or component of any sign, sign structure, or any other item allowed in this chapter, including exempted items, shall be placed, installed, or displayed in a manner that violates applicable building, fire, transportation, or accessibility codes.
- E. Except as provided in subsection (F) of this section, no sign, sign structure, or any portion of a sign or sign structure shall be constructed, erected, or maintained within, or protrude or extend over or into, City right-of-way or state highway right-of-way, except as installed by a duly constituted governmental entity.
- F. All signs and sign structures shall be completely contained within the property lines of the property upon which they are placed.
- G. Signs subject to Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) regulation shall comply with applicable ODOT requirements. No sign shall be placed within state highway right-of-way, including those defined as temporary, except by a governmental entity or as otherwise authorized by ODOT.
- H. Signs shall have a minimum clearance of eight feet above a pedestrian walkway.
- I. The placement requirements of this section apply to the exempted items in Section 16.144.025 of this chapter.
- J. The placement requirements of this section apply to temporary signs in WMC Chapter 9.20.

16.144.040. Maintenance.

- A. All signs, together with their poles, posts, supports, braces, guy wires, anchors, structures, and other structural components, shall be:
 - 1. Maintained in a safe condition;
 - 2. Maintained in a condition that is neat, clean, and in good repair as defined in WMC 16.12.010;
 - 3. Free of rust, corrosion, peeling paint, mold, mildew, or other surface deterioration; and
 - 4. Free of materials or unauthorized attachments not approved as part of the sign.
- B. Upon written notice from the City, the property owner shall repair or remove the sign within 30 calendar days, unless a longer period is approved in writing by the Planning Director, or unless the City determines that the sign presents an immediate threat to public health or safety, in which case the sign shall be repaired, secured, or removed immediately.
- C. A sign structure shall always contain a sign face, except when the sign face has been temporarily removed for repair or maintenance for no more than 30 consecutive days. During the temporary removal period, the remaining structure shall be maintained in a safe condition. Upon reinstallation, the sign face shall be neat, clean, and in good repair as defined in WMC 16.12.010.

16.144.050. Nonconforming permanent signs or permanent sign structures.

Nonconforming permanent signs or permanent sign structures may continue, subject to the restrictions in this section:

- A. A nonconforming permanent sign or permanent sign structure shall not be:
 - 1. Expanded in any dimension that increases the nonconformity;
 - 2. Changed in any way that creates or increases a nonconformity; or
 - 3. Relocated.
- B. A nonconforming permanent sign or permanent sign structure may be maintained,

repaired, or altered, provided no maintenance, repairs, or alterations are made that would increase the nonconformity.

1. If a nonconforming permanent sign or permanent sign structure is destroyed or damaged beyond repair, the sign and/or sign structure shall not be replaced and shall lose its nonconforming status and any remaining portions shall be removed; any new permanent sign or permanent sign structure erected in its place shall comply with the provisions of this chapter.

16.144.055. Temporary signs.

Temporary sign provisions are in WMC Chapter 9.20. Definitions are listed in WMC 16.12.010.

16.144.060. Prohibitions.

A. The following are expressly prohibited:

1. Animated signs;
2. Any sign erected, constructed, installed, displayed, placed, attached, affixed, maintained, or altered in a manner not in compliance with this chapter;
3. Balloon (inflatable) signs;
4. Beacon signs, except those associated with emergencies or permitted aircraft facilities, or placed by government agencies;
5. Billboards;
6. Changeable copy signs;
7. Flashing or blinking signs;
8. Off-premises signs, unless specifically stated as allowed in the zone;
9. Reflective signs, reflective devices on signs, or signs that contain mirrors, reflective devices, or sign components that contain reflective devices;
10. Roof signs;
11. Signs in the A-5 zone;
12. Signs attached to a tree, vegetation, traffic sign, traffic control device, utility pole or box, or streetlight, except as otherwise allowed or required by the government or utility, by this chapter, or by other chapters of the Warrenton Municipal Code;
13. Signs that imitate, obstruct, interfere with, or impair the effectiveness of traffic control devices;
14. Signs (other than government signs) constructed in such a manner or at such a location that they will obstruct access to any fire escape or other means of ingress or egress from a structure, building, exit corridor, exit hallway, or exit doorway. No sign or supporting structure shall cover, wholly or partially, any window or doorway in any manner that will substantially limit access to the building in case of fire;
15. Signs that obstruct the view between drivers and pedestrians at marked or unmarked crosswalks;
16. Signs that emit any odor, noise, or visible matter other than light;
17. Signs that restrict, decrease, or obstruct any portion of clear circulation paths for ADA accessibility as required under federal law;
18. Signs that obstruct traffic control markings or devices, traffic signals, or traffic signs;
19. Temporary signs except as allowed by WMC Chapter 9.20;
20. Unlawful signs;
21. Vehicles or trailers used as signs or as bases for signs where the primary purpose of the vehicles or trailers in that location is their use as a sign;
22. Vehicle signs that are any of the following: internally or externally illuminated signs; video signs; animated signs; moving or rotating signs; flashing or scrolling

signs; or signs that move, contain reflective or glaring devices or use or contain any form of electronic, electrical, battery-operated, computer-operated, or digital mechanisms; and

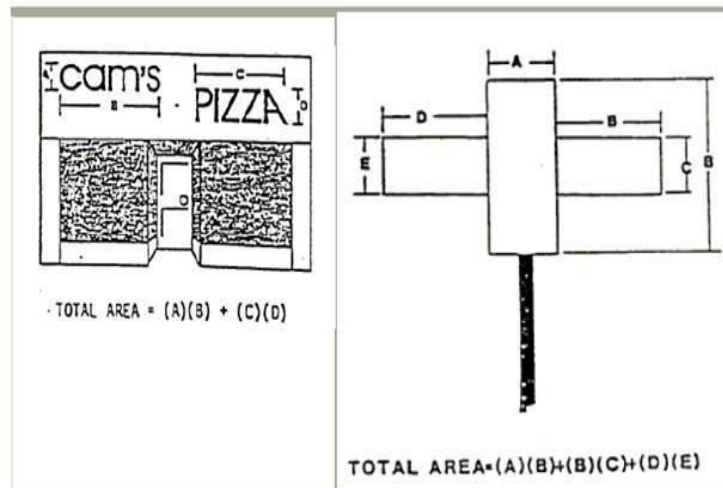
23. Video signs.

16.144.070. Measurements.

The following standards shall be used to determine compliance with this chapter:

- A. Sign Area. The area of a sign shall be computed by determining the area encompassed within the smallest regular geometric figure that encloses the sign, excluding the sign structure and structural supports. When the sign is broken into different parts, the geometric figure shall be placed around each individual part for calculating the area of that part, and then adding the sum of the parts, to reach the overall sign area. See Figure 16.144.070-1 below.

Figure 16.144.070-1: Sign Area Measurements



- B. Height. The height of a sign shall be measured from the grade of the curb line closest to the base of the sign to the highest point of the sign. In the absence of a curb line, the edge of the street pavement shall be used. In the absence of street pavement, the finished grade directly adjacent to or underneath the sign shall be used.
- C. Double or Multi-Faced Signs. The allowable sign area shall be measured using only one face of a double-faced or multi-faced sign, provided each face is identical in size. If the faces differ in size, the larger face controls.
- D. Clearance. The clearance of a sign shall be measured from the finished grade directly underneath the sign to the lowest point of the sign.

16.144.072. Classification of permanent signs.

If a permanent sign contains characteristics of more than one sign type, it shall be classified according to the permanent sign type that most closely describes its physical construction. Where a permanent sign qualifies under more than one permanent sign type, the more restrictive standards apply.

16.144.075. Types of permanent signs.

The following are the types of permanent signs allowed in the City:

- A. Attached signs. Attached signs are wall signs, projecting signs, suspended signs, canopy signs, awning signs, and marquee signs, any of which may be off-premises signs if off-premises signs are allowed in the zoning district in which the off-premises sign is located.

Figure 16.144.075-1: Examples of Attached Signs



Projecting sign

Suspended sign



Wall sign

Projecting sign

- B. Freestanding signs. Freestanding signs are ground-mounted signs, monument signs, and pole signs, any of which may be off-premises signs if off-premises signs are allowed in the zoning district in which the off-premises sign is located.

Figure 16.144.075-2: Examples of Freestanding Signs



Ground-mounted sign

Monument sign



Pole sign

16.144.080. Permanent signs in the R-40, R-10, R-M, and R-H zones.

The following permanent signs are allowed in the R-40, R-10, R-M, and R-H zones for permitted and approved nonresidential uses and permitted and approved multifamily residential developments only:

A. Attached Signs and Freestanding Signs

1. Number. There is no limit to the number of attached and freestanding signs per permitted and approved nonresidential use or permitted and approved multifamily residential development, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (A)(2) of this section.
2. Area.
 - a. Each permitted and approved nonresidential use or multifamily residential development is allowed up to, but no more than, **XXX square feet** of total attached and freestanding sign area combined.

B. Height.

1. No attached sign may extend above the face of the wall to which is attached.
2. The maximum height of a freestanding sign is 20 feet, measured in accordance with WMC 16.144.070(B).

C. Illumination. Internal illumination is prohibited. External illumination may be provided in accordance with the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.**D.** In addition to the prohibitions of WMC 16.144.060, electronic message centers and off-premises signs are prohibited.**16.144.085. Permanent signs in the C-1 (Main Avenue between Whiskey Road and NE 1st Street) and C-MU zones.**

The following permanent signs are allowed in the C-1 (Main Avenue between Whiskey Road and NE 1st Street) and the C-MU zones:

A. Attached signs.

1. Number. There is no limit to the number of attached signs on a building, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (A)(2) of this section.
2. Area.
 - a. Each tenant space in a building is allowed up to, but no more than, **XXX square feet** of attached sign area.

- B. Freestanding signs.
 - 1. Number.
 - a. One per legal lot of record, provided the lot has 50 linear feet or more of frontage, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (B)(2) of this section. Two or more contiguous lots under the same ownership, wherein each of the lots has less than 50 linear feet of frontage, may have their frontages combined for purposes of determining the linear feet of frontage for the one allowed freestanding sign. This is the only instance where frontage may be combined for purposes of sign allowance.
 - 2. Area.
 - a. One square foot of sign area per one linear foot of frontage, up to a maximum of **XXX square feet**.
 - 3. Placement.
 - a. No freestanding sign is allowed within 50 feet of another freestanding sign.
 - 4. Height.
 - a. Maximum height of 20 feet, measured in accordance with WMC 16.144.070(B).
 - 5. Illumination. Internal or external illumination is allowed, subject to the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.
- C. Off-premises signs and electronic message centers.
 - 1. Off-premises signs are allowed and may be attached or freestanding signs, but only within the allowed number, area, placement, and height requirements of this section.
 - 2. Electronic message centers are allowed subject to the requirements of WMC 16.144.120.

16.144.090. Permanent signs in the C-1 zone (all C-1 zone areas other than along Main Avenue between Whiskey Road and NE 1st Street).

The following permanent signs are allowed in the C-1 zone (all C-1 zone areas other than along Main Avenue between Whiskey Road and NE 1st Street):

- A. Attached signs.
 - 1. Number. There is no limit to the number of attached signs on a building, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (A)(2) of this section.
 - 2. Area.
 - a. Each tenant space in a building is allowed up to, but no more than, **XXX square feet** of attached sign area, except that:
 - i. Tenant spaces with 100 linear feet or more of frontage are allowed to increase the **XXX-square-foot** allowance by one square foot for each linear foot of frontage up to a maximum of **XXX square feet**.
 - 3. Illumination. Internal or external illumination is allowed, subject to the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.
- B. Freestanding signs.
 - 1. Number.
 - a. One per legal lot of record, provided the lot has 50 linear feet or more of frontage, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (B)(2) of this section. Two or more contiguous lots under the same ownership, wherein each of the lots has less than 50 linear feet of frontage, may have their frontages combined for purposes of determining the linear feet of frontage for the one allowed freestanding sign. This is the only instance where frontage may be combined for purposes of sign allowance.

- b. In cases where a legal lot of record has more than one frontage (such as a corner lot), both of which exceed 300 linear feet, that legal lot of record may have one freestanding sign for each frontage, provided the freestanding sign allotted per frontage is placed adjacent, and oriented, to the frontage from which the allowance is obtained.
- 2. Area.
 - a. One square foot of sign area per one linear foot of frontage, up to a maximum area of **xxx square feet**.
- 3. Placement.
 - a. No freestanding sign is allowed within 300 linear feet of another freestanding sign on the same legal lot of record.
- 4. Height.
 - a. Maximum height of 45 feet, measured in accordance with WMC 16.144.070(B).
- 5. Illumination. Internal or external illumination is allowed, subject to the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.
- C. Off-premises signs and electronic message centers.
 - 1. Off-premises signs are allowed and may be attached or freestanding signs, but only within the allowed number, area, placement, and height requirements of this section.
 - 2. Electronic message centers are allowed subject to the requirements of WMC 16.144.120.

16.144.095. Permanent signs in the I-1, I-2, and CI zones.

The following permanent signs are allowed in the I-1, I-2, and CI zones:

- A. Attached signs.
 - 1. Number. There is no limit to the number of attached signs on a building, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (A)(2) of this section.
 - 2. Area.
 - a. Each tenant space in a building is allowed up to, but no more than, **xxx square feet** of attached sign area, except that:
 - i. Tenant spaces with 100 linear feet or more of frontage are allowed to increase the 60-square-foot allowance by one square foot for each linear foot of frontage up to a maximum of 100 square feet.
 - 3. Illumination. Internal or external illumination is allowed, subject to the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.
- B. Freestanding signs.
 - 1. Number.
 - a. One per legal lot of record, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (B)(2) of this section, provided the lot has 50 linear feet or more of frontage. Two or more contiguous lots under the same ownership, wherein each of the lots has less than 50 linear feet of frontage, may have their frontages combined for purposes of determining the linear feet of frontage for the one allowed freestanding sign. This is the only instance where frontage may be combined for purposes of sign allowance.
 - b. In cases where a legal lot of record has more than one frontage (such as a corner lot), both of which exceed 300 linear feet, that legal lot of record may have one freestanding sign for each frontage, provided the freestanding sign allotted per frontage is placed adjacent, and oriented, to the frontage from which the

allowance is obtained.

2. Area.
 - a. One square foot of sign area per one linear foot of frontage, up to a maximum area of **XXX square feet**.
3. Placement.
 - a. No freestanding sign may be within 300 linear feet of another freestanding sign on the same legal lot of record.
4. Height.
 - a. Maximum height of 45 feet, measured in accordance with WMC 16.144.070(B).
5. Illumination. Internal or external illumination is allowed, subject to the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.
- C. Off-premises signs and electronic message centers.
 1. Off-premises signs are allowed and may be attached or freestanding signs, but only within the allowed number, area, placement, and height requirements of this section.
 2. Electronic message centers are allowed subject to the requirements of WMC 16.144.120.

16.144.100. Permanent signs in the OSI, R-C, C-2, A-1, A-2, and A-3 zones.

The following permanent signs are allowed in the OSI, R-C, C-2, A-1, A-2, and A-3 zones:

- A. Attached signs.
 1. Number.
 - a. There is no limit to the number of attached signs on a building, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (A)(2) of this section.
 2. Area.
 - a. Each tenant space in a building is allowed up to, but no more than, **XXX square feet** of attached sign area.
 3. Illumination. Only external illumination is allowed, subject to the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.
- B. Freestanding signs.
 1. Number.
 - a. One per legal lot of record, subject to the aggregate total area limitation of subsection (B)(2) of this section, provided the lot has 200 linear feet or more of frontage. Two or more contiguous lots under the same ownership, wherein each of the lots has less than 200 linear feet of frontage, may have their frontages combined for purposes of determining the linear feet of frontage for the one allowed freestanding sign. This is the only instance where frontage may be combined for purposes of sign allowance.
 2. Area.
 - a. One square foot of freestanding sign area per one linear foot of frontage, up to a maximum area of **XXX square feet**.
 3. Placement.
 - a. No freestanding sign may be within 200 linear feet of another freestanding sign.
 4. Height.
 - a. Maximum height of 20 feet, measured in accordance with WMC 16.144.070(B).
- C. Illumination. Only external illumination is allowed, subject to the provisions of WMC 16.144.110.
- D. In addition to the prohibitions of WMC 16.144.060, electronic message centers and off-premises signs are prohibited.

16.144.110. Illumination.

- A. All internal and external sign illumination shall comply with this section.
- B. Signs may be illuminated by any lighting technology that complies with this chapter.
- C. External light sources used to illuminate a sign shall be shielded and directed downward so that illumination is limited to the sign face.
- D. Internal illumination of signs shall comply with the following:
 - 1. Opaque backgrounds required. The background of all signs with internal illumination shall be completely opaque. Light transmission through the sign face shall be limited to individual letters, numbers, and logos.
 - 2. Maximum translucent surface area. No more than 30% of the total surface area of the sign face may be translucent or emit light. The application shall identify on the sign elevation the total sign face area and the total illuminated sign face area demonstrating compliance with this subsection.
 - 3. Prohibited materials. Solid white, clear, or highly translucent plastic backgrounds that allow internal lighting components to be visible through the sign face are prohibited.
 - 4. A signed specification sheet from the sign manufacturer demonstrating compliance with subsections (1) through (3) of this section shall accompany the sign permit application.
- E. Internal lighting components, including LED nodes, neon tubes, reflection panels, light bars, or similar components inside the sign shall not be visible from any right-of-way or from the common property lines of adjoining property.
- F. No illuminated sign shall exceed the illumination limits established in subsection (G) of this section.
- G. Illumination violation.
 - 1. Violation criteria. A violation of this section occurs when measurements taken by the City using a calibrated illuminance meter demonstrate that light emitted from a sign exceeds 0.2 foot-candles when measured at the property line of any adjacent property or exceeds 0.5 foot-candles when measured at the property line of adjacent right-of-way. For purposes of this section, one foot-candle shall be deemed equal to 10.76 lux. Readings may be taken in lux and converted using this formula.
 - 2. Measurement protocol. Measurements shall be taken at least one hour after local sunset. Readings must be taken using an illuminance meter held between four and five feet above the ground, with the sensor pointed directly at the sign. To determine the light strictly emitted by the sign, the City shall take a baseline reading with the sign turned off (or fully blanked) and subtract it from the reading taken while the sign is illuminated at maximum active nighttime operating brightness.
 - 3. Equipment and environmental standards. The illuminance meter used by the City must be calibrated annually by the manufacturer or other qualified calibrator. Measurements shall only be taken during clear atmospheric conditions, wind less than approximately 10 miles per hour, free of precipitation, fog, dense smoke, or accumulating rain or snow falling through the air, and with a clear, unobstructed line of sight between the meter sensor and the sign.

16.144.120. Electronic message centers.

- A. All electronic message centers shall be equipped with automatic dimming controls that automatically adjust the display brightness based on ambient light conditions.
- B. One electronic message center is allowed per legal lot of record.
- C. The display in an electronic message center shall remain static for a minimum duration

of eight seconds before changing.

- D. The transition from one static display to another shall be instantaneous. Prohibited transitions include, but are not limited to flashing, blinking, scrolling, fading, dissolving, zooming, or any illusion of moving video.
- E. The sign permit application shall include a signed manufacturer's certification verifying that the electronic message center is equipped with:
 - 1. Automatic dimming controls; and
 - 2. A malfunction freeze mechanism that freezes and defaults the display to a black screen upon malfunction.
- F. An electronic message center:
 - 1. Shall be incorporated into an attached or freestanding sign;
 - 2. Shall not be permitted as a stand-alone sign;
 - 3. Shall be included in the calculation of permitted sign area; and
 - 4. Shall comply with this chapter.
- G. If an electronic message center fails to comply with the requirements of this section due to malfunction, the sign shall be turned off until repaired.
- H. Electronic message centers shall comply with WMC 16.144.110.

16.144.130. Violations.

Any sign that is located, placed, erected, constructed, maintained, repaired, or used in violation of this chapter constitutes a violation that shall be addressed by the City as provided in WMC 16.16.030.

CHAPTER 9.20 TEMPORARY SIGNS

9.20.005 Purposes/applicability/interpretation/severability.

- A. The purposes of this chapter are to:
 - 1. Clarify the standards, conditions, and limitations on content-neutral regulations for temporary signs that do not constitute land development and therefore are not subject to WMC Title 16 or applicable land development regulations; and
 - 2. Regulate the size, illumination, movement, location, and condition of all temporary signs placed on private or public property, thus ensuring the protection of property value and public safety, including pedestrian and traffic safety.
- B. This chapter does not regulate permanent signs or signs requiring a sign permit or a structural sign permit.
- C. This chapter must be interpreted in a manner consistent with the United States and Oregon constitutional guarantees of free speech and expression.
- D. If any provision of this chapter is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such findings shall not affect the validity of other provisions of this chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision.

9.20.010 Definitions.

The definitions concerning signs set forth in WMC 16.12.010 apply to this chapter and are incorporated herein by this reference.

9.20.020 Allowances.

Subject to compliance with placement requirements, prohibitions, and conditions set forth in this chapter, as well as the placement requirements in WMC 16.144.035, the following are not considered land development, are allowed, and are exempt from sign permit and structural sign permit requirements:

- A. Temporary Sign Allowed at Any Time.
 - 1. One temporary sign with a sign area not exceeding six square feet is allowed on the owner's property at any time.
 - 2. If such temporary sign becomes dilapidated, it shall be removed or replaced.
- B. Temporary Window Signs.
 - 1. A property owner may place temporary signs inside or outside windows on the property at any time.
- C. Temporary Signs Placed Outside during Official Federal, State, or Local Election Periods.
 - 1. Up to four temporary signs with a sign area not exceeding eight square feet, for each such sign, may be erected on private property, with the permission of the property owner, for a period of 60 days prior to an official federal, state, or local election day and for five days following the day of the election.
 - 2. One temporary banner sign, not to exceed 32 square feet, may be substituted for the four eight-square-foot signs, during the above-referenced 65-day period, provided such banner is securely attached to a structure.
 - 3. Property owners have the option of having up to four temporary signs or one temporary banner sign but cannot have both.
- D. A Single Temporary Sign Placed Outside During the Period of Time a Real Property is Being Marketed, in Good Faith, for Sale or Lease.
 - 1. Such single temporary sign shall not exceed eight square feet in sign area when located on a residential property and 32 square feet in sign area when located on a nonresidential property.
 - 2. Such signs may be erected beginning the day the property is offered for sale or lease and be removed within 30 days after the property is no longer for sale or lease.
- E. Flags.
 - 1. A property owner may place up to XXX flags, attached to a flagpole or structure, on the owner's property at any time. The flagpole or structure to which the flag is being attached may require a structural permit through the building department.
 - 2. The number of flags allowed under subsection (E)(1) of this section may be increased based on the number of licensed businesses physically present on the property, not to exceed XXX flags per business.
- F. Portable signs.
 - 1. One portable sign per property, except that each licensed business physically present on the property shall be allowed one portable sign, regardless of the number of licensed businesses physically present on the property.
 - 2. A portable sign shall not exceed XXX square feet in sign area.
- G. Signs for Temporary Use Permits.
 - 1. A person or entity holding a temporary use permit for a seasonal or special event issued under WMC 16.240.010(A) may display signs for the duration of the seasonal or special event, such duration as specified in the permit.
 - 2. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum of eight signs whose combined areas shall not total more than 160 square feet, in addition to any other temporary or permanent signs allowed under this chapter or WMC Chapter 16.240.
 - 3. The permittee must remove any such signs no later than one day following the end date of the seasonal or special event as specified in the permit.
 - 4. Display of the signs must take place wholly on private property with the permission of the property owner.

- A. No temporary sign shall obstruct clear vision, vehicular or pedestrian circulation, or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access requirements.
- B. No temporary sign shall ever be placed in or on right-of-way, other than official traffic control devices or government signs. This applies to both City and Oregon state highway rights-of-way. Any sign placed in or on right-of-way is subject to immediate removal and impoundment by the City.
- C. The placement of temporary signs shall be on private property with the consent of the property owner prior to placement.

9.20.040 Prohibitions.

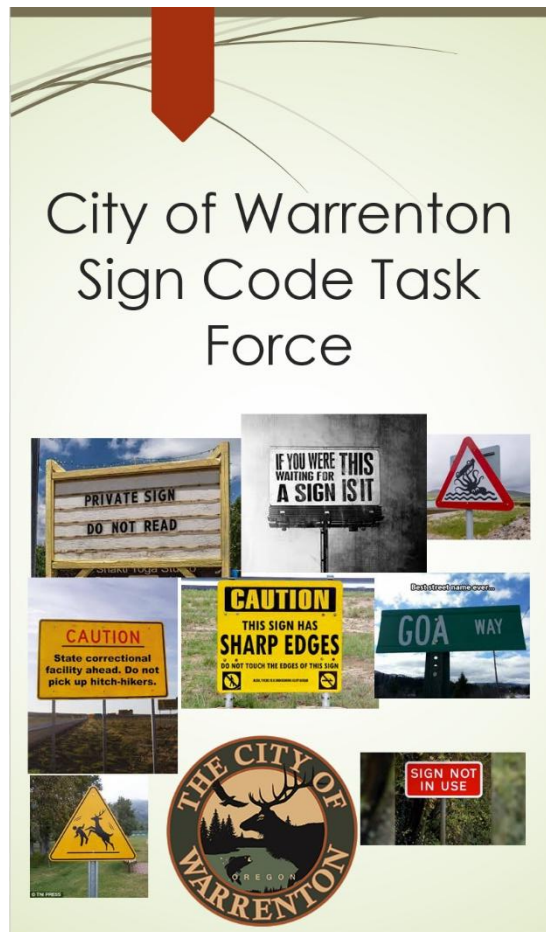
- A. Temporary signs are prohibited in the City except when specifically exempted or otherwise authorized under this chapter.
- B. A temporary sign authorized under this chapter may not include any form of prohibited sign listed in WMC 16.144.060 Prohibitions.

9.20.050 General standards, conditions, and limitations for temporary signs.

- A. This chapter authorizes only temporary signs. See WMC Chapter 16.144 for permanent sign authorizations. This chapter does not authorize any signs or sign structures that require sign permits, structural sign permits, or electrical permits.
- B. Temporary signs are allowed on undeveloped properties subject to compliance with this chapter.
- C. Placement of prohibited signs or temporary signs in violation of this chapter subjects both the sign owner and property owner upon which the sign is placed to violation and penalty proceedings by the City.
- D. Any temporary sign placed as allowed under this chapter shall be removed by the end of the period specified for the type of sign or both the sign owner and property owner of the property upon which the sign is placed shall be subject to violation and penalty proceedings by the City.
- E. Nothing in this chapter authorizes temporary signs in violation of any applicable federal, state, county, or City law. The sign owner is solely responsible for obtaining any required permits from federal, state, county, and City agencies when required by applicable regulations.

9.20.060 Violation and penalty.

- A. Violation of any provision of this chapter shall be considered a nuisance, unlawful, and an offense against the City, and shall be enforced in accordance with WMC Chapter 9.04.
- B. Each day's violation of a provision of this chapter constitutes a separate offense as stated in WMC 9.04.290.
- C. No provision in this chapter shall preclude abatement of a nuisance as provided in the City's general nuisance ordinance in accordance with WMC 9.04.310.



Preliminary Report to the Warrenton City Commission

Prepared by the Warrenton Sign Code Task Force

Project History

The City of Warrenton Development Code includes several sections that reference the regulation of signs. Most of the restrictions are outlined in Section 16.144. The listing of all current sign regulations can be found in Appendix A. These sign regulations have not been significantly updated since the initial adoption of the first City of Warrenton zoning ordinance in 1980 and the current development code in 2002. However, the character of the Warrenton community has changed dramatically since that time.

The population of the City of Warrenton has increased by over 3000 people since 1990 or about a 93% increase. The city has supported the development of a regional commercial retail center at the intersection of SE Ensign Lane and Highway 101. The area serves as a regional retail center for the north Oregon coast. New residential neighborhoods have expanded the range and types of housing available within the city. Change continues...

In January of 2023, Mayor Henry Balensifer appointed a Sign Code Task Force. In it, he cited the lack of clarity within regulations and the uneven interpretation resulting from the ambiguous language.

“The sign code in Warrenton is unfair to off-site businesses, and is incongruous—or at least antinomic—with the design standards purpose statement found in WMC 16.116.010. In other cases, the sign code is cumbersome to enforce. New sign design standards are needed.”

Henry Balensifer – Sign Standards Task Force Statement

The challenges related to the current sign regulations are three-fold.

- The regulations are very broad and terms are undefined. This creates issues for staff by creating confusion on terms and the potential for changing interpretations with changing staff.
- For the development community and landowners it is difficult to plan for sign costs with the lack of clarity.
- Staff also finds it difficult to create fair and even-handed interpretations of the code resulting in a large number of signs that do not meet the code as it stands today.

The Warrenton Sign Task Force began meeting in January 2023 and met monthly through the completion of this report. In January, the Task Force reviewed the following:

- The tasking statement,
- Baseline definitions,
- Current code requirements (or the lack thereof),
- Sample code requirements from similar cities in Oregon, and

They also set a schedule for future meetings. The committee agreed to look at other communities with similar development patterns, including 1) Brookings, Oregon, 2) McMinnville, Oregon, and 3) Port Townsend, Washington. The task force learned about sign regulations, definitions, and sign types. In March a draft report was presented and modifications made prior to review by other affected groups. Comments received during the process will be incorporated into the final report.

Committee Membership

The following community members and interested parties were appointed to the Warrenton Sign Code Task Force:

Jessica Sollaccio, Task Force Chair and Warrenton Planning Commissioner

Christy Coulombe, Saltaire Coastal Homes and Warrenton Urban Renewal Advisory Board

Camille Bone, RTG Property Management/Youngs Bay Plaza

Kevin Leahy, Clatsop Economic Development Resources

David Reid, Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce

Staff: Jay Blake, Warrenton Planning Director

Meetings were held at Warrenton City Hall on

- January 30, 2023
- February 27, 2023
- March 27, 2023
- June 26, 2023

Copies of the draft report were mailed to interested parties in May. The list included all Warrenton members of the Astoria Chamber of Commerce, Port of Astoria and Camp Rilea.

Project Recommendations:

Sign Code General Recommendations:

- The Warrenton Sign Code should be written in a manner that is easy to understand and easily accessible to the general public.
- The Warrenton Sign Code should support the goals and policies found in the Warrenton Comprehensive Plan, and Urban Renewal Plans for the downtown neighborhoods.
- Signs types that are regulated or exempt from regulations should be clearly defined.

- The following signs should not require permits:
 - Temporary Signs,
 - Signs that are not visible from the public right-of-way, or
 - Signs that advertise within a facility and are not designed to be seen from off-site locations.

Sign Code Location:

- The Warrenton sign code should be moved from the Development Code to a stand-alone section of the Warrenton Municipal and be independent of State review.

Sign Code Provisions

- Because visibility and traffic patterns, different areas within the city should have different sign standards. The Warrenton Sign Code should establish sign districts, including
 - Residential,
 - Downtown Commercial,
 - Highway Commercial,
 - Industrial, and
 - Special Districts.
- The following signs should be exempt from regulation:
 - Garage Sale Signs,
 - Real Estate Signs,
 - Incidental/Directional Signs,
 - Window Signs,
 - Public Signs,
 - Seasonal Decorations,
 - Governmental Flags,
 - Public Service (Entrance/Rest Room) Signs,
 - Historical Monument Signs,
 - Political Signs,
 - Signs not visible from rights-of-way,
 - Signs within an athletic field,
 - Hand-held signs,
 - Drive-up Menu Board,
 - Public Art.

- Billboards and temporary changeable reader board signs should not be allowed within the city.

Downtown Commercial / Mixed Use Neighborhoods:

- The City of Warrenton should establish sign design standards for both the Downtown Warrenton and Historic Hammond neighborhoods. These standards should be driven by business and property owners from the respective areas.
- Sign sizes and heights in the downtown districts and mixed-use neighborhoods should reflect a more pedestrian oriented design, reflecting slower traffic speeds, and pedestrian-oriented development.
- The city should authorize the use of temporary sandwich board signs in the downtown commercial and mixed-use districts ensuring that the signs are removed during non-business hours and do not block or create an accessibility hazard on the sidewalks.

Downtown Commercial /Mixed Use Sign Types:



1 - Directional Pylon Signs



2 - Monument (Area) Signs



3 - Wall Signs (Based on Façade Size)



4 - Projecting Signs (Based on Façade Size)



5 - Public Signs

Sandwich Board Signs

- Restricted by sidewalk width for Americans with Disability Act compliance
- Not left out over night or during non-business hours



6 - Sandwich Board Signs

Highway Commercial District Signs:

- Highway Commercial sign sizes and heights in the highway commercial districts should reflect the higher traffic speeds and auto-oriented development patterns.
- Highway Commercial wall sign size regulations should be based on a percentage of the building façade sizes for wall-attached commercial signs.
- Separate size and height restrictions should be set for detached pylon or commercial center signs based on front footage of the property.
- The City should require a sign master plan for connected commercial developments.
- Traffic control, public safety, parking or other incidental signs should not be considered as part of the overall commercial signage plan.

Highway Commercial Sign Types:

7 - Monument Signs



8 - Wall Signs (Based on Façade Size)



10 - Changing Message/Reader Board Signs



9 - Pylon Signs (Based on Front Footage)



11 - Directional Sign

Residential Districts:

- Residential signs should not detract from the residential character of the neighborhood. Where mixed use developments are proposed, the Planning Commission should review the sign plans for the development.
- The City should allow temporary signs for garage/yard sales, real estate sales, during the political season. Temporary signs should not cause traffic or safety concerns.

Temporary Signs



12 - Garage Sale



13 - Real Estate (On-site and provisions for allowing off-site real estate signage)



14 - Political Signs



15 - Home Occupation Signs



16 - Directional Signs

Industrial (non-aquatic) Districts

- Industrial signs should provide clear direction for deliveries and heavy traffic.
- Where feasible an area/monument signs should be developed to direct heavy industrial traffic.

Industrial Districts Sign Types:



17 - Monument / Area Signs



19 - Pylon Signs (Based on Front Footage)



18 - Wall Signs (Based on Façade Size)



20 - Changing Message/Reader Board Signs



21 - Directional Signs

Special Districts:

- Special Districts include the following zoning districts
 - Open Space Institutional (OSI)
 - Recreational Commercial
 - Aquatic Development
 - Aquatic Conservation
 - Shoreland Overlay District
- Sign restrictions should reflect the goals and policies of the underlying zoning classification. Sign size, lighting and location limitations should be based on surrounding uses and land use zones.

Special District Sign Types:



22 - Monument/Area Signs



23 - Public Signs



24 - Wall Signs (Based on Façade Size)

Off-Site Advertising Signs:

- The City of Warrenton does not want to allow the proliferation of large billboard type advertising signs along the major transportation corridors within the city. The City prefers small off-site directional signs for local businesses. These signs should be considered by conditional use permit by the Planning Commission.
- Off-site advertising signs should be located in Highway Commercial or Industrial sign districts and not in Residential sign districts
- Typical billboard signs range in size from 72 sf to 672 sf. These signs are distracting to the natural beauty of the area and should not be allowed.



25 - Allowed



26 - Not Allowed (Based on size restrictions)

Table 1 - Sign Types by District

Sign Types	Sign District				
	Residential	Downtown Commercial	Highway Commercial	Industrial	Special Districts
Billboards	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Changing Message Boards	Not Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed
Directional Signs	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Home Occupation Sign	Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Monument Sign	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Off-Site Sign	Not Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed
Projecting Sign	Not Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Pylon Sign	Not Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed
Public Signs	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Temporary Signs	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Wall Sign	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed

TASK FORCE CREATION STATEMENT

Statement No. 4
January 6, 2023

Name

Signage and Marketing Standards Task Force

Issue Introduction

The Warrenton Municipal Code regarding onsite and offsite signage has long been the bane of staff and constituents alike. Contemporary examples are Skipanon Brand and The Human Bean.

Skipanon Brand Seafood Cannery was located off Galena Ave (technically 3rd St), behind a levy and across the Skipanon River. The only way a person could see where the cannery and retail shop was located was either with a very high and very large onsite sign — which likely would not be seen anyway — or a smaller, offsite sign at the intersection of Galena and Harbor Ave. Both options violated the city code (size restrictions for onsite sign and prohibition on offsite sign).

The Human Bean started in the North Coast Retail Center, but was quickly blocked from view by the Wauna Federal Credit Union and Taco Bell buildings. They asked for a sign variance, but since WMC 16.144.020 (I) outright prohibits off-premise signs, their request was denied. While The Human Bean has been successful despite the challenges, other businesses may not have been able to overcome the lack of exposure.

In other cases, there has also been a lack of enforcement of sign safety requirements. An example is the sign on wheels placed in the shoulder of the road near the Sandridge Construction building across from City Hall. It is not secured against wind pushing it into the drive lane, risking possible damage to persons and vehicles. There are also signs for permanent woodlots that do not meet standards for wind shear, and unsecured garage sale signs are frequently placed in the public right-of-way or traffic islands. Sandwich boards on sidewalks have created obstacles for wheelchair users.

Problem Statement

The sign code in Warrenton is unfair to businesses that need offsite signage and is incongruous with the design standards purpose statement found in WMC 16.116.010. In other cases, the sign code is cumbersome to enforce. New sign design standards are needed, and a clearer, faster enforcement process should be considered.

Task Mandate

To review WMC 16.144 “SIGNS” and prepare a recommendation for amendments, updates or a completely new sign code to adopt. The task force shall address these tasks in order of importance:

1. Review the text of WMC 16.144.
2. Review other codes relevant to signage that warrant consideration.

3. Review WMC 16.192.080 “LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS”, WMC 16.240.030 “HOME OFFICE PERMITS”, WMC 16.224.040 F. “DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS”, WMC 16.240.020 “HOME OCCUPATION PERMITS”.
4. Determine the levels of enforcement required to ensure fair implementation and application of code changes, and whether enforcement is realistic to attain. Identify where enforcement codes should be placed within the Warrenton Municipal Code.

Questions to consider to begin discussions (not all inclusive):

1. What regulations do other cities have that work? What regulations do other cities have that should be avoided?
2. Should signage codes in the modern HWY 101 corridor, or any other corridor/neighborhood, be different from those in the historical downtown and residential districts that have slower speed limits?
 - Consult the City’s Vision Plan, Urban Renewal Plan, and Downtown & Marina Master Plan (2010) for more input on this question.
 - Will the suggested code alterations infringe on future plans for an orderly revitalization of the Hammond District?
3. Should businesses be able to display temporary flags and inflatable signs in a permanent manner?
4. Sandwich boards and other portable/temporary signage: What is an appropriate use for them onsite and offsite? Should they be allowed in public rights-of-way with or without a permit, or even allowed at all? If so, how long? Is that enforceable?

Specific Requirements

The task force shall keep its discussions focused on signage. Topics that arise that may be related to, but not directly pertinent to, signage may be noted in the final report for the Planning Commission or City Commission to consider later if the task force feels it merits future attention.

Changes that require long-term enforcement burdens greater than what is currently in place must be justified with either a proposed source of revenue to resource that burden, or an explanation of how to improve/reduce resources necessary to take enforcement (e.g. move enforcement of items under a different part of the code so it is not a land use action).

Before issuing its final report, the task force shall consult the USCG Air Station Astoria Air Operations Officer and Camp Rilea Training Site Manager to ensure any recommended restrictions or absence of restrictions related to the signage characteristics (e.g. lighting pointing up or flashing that could impair night vision systems or confuse navigation) do not impede nor inhibit training or rescue efforts in or near the City. The result of these consultations shall be included in the final report.

Procedural Rules

The task force should convene no less than once a month, but should consider meeting as frequently as staff is able to support and the majority of its membership available.

The task force may seek out and invite persons to attend, provide input at or submit comments to its meetings, but as a task force it is not required to hold public comment periods. There will be plenty of time for that during traditionally publicized Planning and City Commission hearings.

No person except those appointed in this statement have standing to vote or decide issues before the task force.

Membership & Appointment

Authority to Appoint

Chapter V §19 of the Warrenton City Charter; City Commission Rules Chapter 3 §M 2.C.i.

Charter and Appointments:

Under the authority vested under the Warrenton City Charter, and as authorized by the City Commission Rules, I hereby charter the Signage and Marketing Standards Task Force and appoint the following voting members to it:

- Jessica Sollaccio, Planning Commissioner
- Christy Coulombe, Urban Renewal Advisory Board Member & Realtor
- Camille Bone, Property Manager—Atlas Properties
- Kevin Leahy, Executive Director—CEDR
- David Reid, Executive Director—Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce

Appointed Chairperson

Planning Commissioner Jessica Sollaccio has completed City of Warrenton chairpersons training and will serve as presiding officer.

Required Attendees

The task force shall not meet officially unless the presiding officer is present and a city staff member is present.

Supporting Staff

City Planner Jay Blake shall act as the staff support for this task force. His involvement is approved by the City Manager.

Expected Outcome

The outcome should be in the form of recommendations to the City Commission. If accepted, it will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for rulemaking. The recommendation should include, in no particular order:

- List of members
- Summary of work
- Specific changes proposed and whether each was supported by consensus or vote
- Any maps or visual aids if the changes are specific to certain areas in the city
- A brief on issues or topics that were discussed but not acted on or supported

- The results of consultation with USCG and OR Military Dept/Camp Rilea
- List of names of individuals and/or businesses that provided additional testimony, or were consulted about their experiences. Testimony and/or narratives are not required to be included.
- Conclusion with anticipated impacts of the new sign code
- Any concluding recommendations related to the work of the task force, including post implementation metrics and evaluation ideas.

Deadline

This task force is to complete its work and issue a recommendation to the Mayor, copying the City Recorder, by June 21, 2023.

Sunset

Dissolution of this task force will occur automatically on June 27, 2023.



Henry A. Balensifer III, Mayor