

# PLAN COMMISSION

## INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

### TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE SIGN ORDINANCE – WALL SIGNS

**FEBRUARY 16, 2015**

#### **Title**

PC 15-03

#### **Petitioner**

Village of Lombard

#### **Property Location**

Village-wide

#### **Approval Sought**

Text amendment to Sections 153.503(B)(12), 153.504(B)(16), 153.505(B)(19), 153.506(B)(18), 153.507(B)(11) and 153.508(B)(19): amending the permitted number of wall signs; Section 153.602: amending and supplementing the definition of sign, area of: wall/awning/canopy signs (and any other requisite companion amendments and references for clarity) of the Village of Lombard Sign Ordinance.

#### **Prepared By**

Tami Urish  
Planner I

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The Village has a history of amending its Zoning and Sign Ordinances to address evolving circumstances presented by petitioners, business owners, or through discussions with Village representatives. Following up from the January 26, 2015 workshop of the Lombard Plan Commission, staff is bringing forward several amendments pertaining to wall signs to provide for flexibility of text and/or graphic placement. Additionally, amendments to the definition of a wall sign are offered for further clarity. The proposed text amendments do not change the maximum allowable square footage of the total sign surface area.

The amendments would apply to all commercial (B1 Limited Neighborhood Shopping District, B2 General Neighborhood Shopping District, B3 Community Shopping District, B4 Corridor Commercial District, B4A Roosevelt Road Corridor District, B5 Central Business District, and B5A Downtown Perimeter District), office and industrial zoning district classifications.

#### **INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW**

##### **Building Division:**

The Building Division has no issues or concerns regarding the proposed text amendments to the Sign Ordinance.

##### **Fire Department:**

The Fire Department has no issues or concerns regarding the proposed text amendments to the Sign Ordinance.

##### **Private Engineering Services:**

Private Engineering Services has no issues or concerns regarding the proposed text amendments to the Sign Ordinance.

##### **Public Works:**

The Department of Public Works has no issues or concerns regarding the proposed text amendments to the Sign Ordinance.

##### **Planning Services:**

The Village of Lombard has seen an upward trend in signage relief in regards to wall signage for retail establishments. Recently a number of businesses have requested relief or discussed with staff the need for a second sign to distribute the total allowable square footage. Generally this request originates in incorporating a logo into a

wall sign or the façade of the building has been updated to a narrow, horizontal design. See image below for example:



As referenced in the January Workshop memo, staff contacted eighteen neighboring communities regarding regulations of wall signs. There does not appear to be a clear consensus on the limitation of the number of wall signs. While more than half of the communities restrict the number of wall signs to one, as does the Village of Lombard, there appears to be a trend underway that other communities are moving away from this restriction by using a maximum square footage amount permitted as the tool to limit excessive signage.

Over the past decade, at least ten petitioners have requested relief to allow for more than one wall sign per tenant space. Most recently, the petitioner for SPA 14-01 (AMC Theatres) requested an additional wall sign in addition to an increase in the maximum allowable square footage permitted. Also, the petitioner of PC 14-37 (example above) recently requested an additional wall sign in order to evenly distribute the square footage afforded to the tenant space. No additional square footage was requested.

### **EXISTING & PROPOSED REGULATIONS**

In the Commercial Shopping Districts, only one wall sign is permitted per street front exposure or tenant space. Single tenants that occupy corner lots or tenants of multi-tenant centers that occupy the exterior corner of the shopping center are allowed an additional wall sign that is required to face the second street exposure. The maximum allowable square footage of signage is determined by the tenant's lineal footage along the street exposure of each street in this case. The exception addresses the street front exposure only of one sign each and does not provide any additional advantage in reference to design flexibility. Removing the provision of one (1) wall sign per business would provide greater freedom to incorporate geometric shapes within the total allowable square footage without the necessity to include blank wall space as the interpretation of the current code requires.

Amending the definition of "Sign, Area of" would alter the manner in which an area is calculated by eliminating unintentional blank space to be counted within the total area. This would allow for more than one sign while eliminating the request to calculate each letter in a word as a separate sign. Staff can determine that a sign on a single raceway is considered one sign to be encapsulated in the straight line geometric feature. The requested adjustments to the code are to accommodate artistic expression and not increase the size of signs.

## Chapter 153: SIGNS

### §153.503 – Office District requirements.

(B) *Permitted signs.* All signs located in an O Office District shall conform to the specific requirements set forth in this Chapter. In an O Office District, no sign shall be permitted except for the following named signs:

(12) Wall Signs, in accordance with the provisions set forth in § 153.242. In addition, no wall sign shall be erected or maintained in any O Office District unless it also meets all of the following requirements:

(a) *Area:* The total sign surface area of all wall signs on any single parcel of property shall not exceed one time the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted. The total sign surface area of ~~any~~ all signs on any single wall sign façade with street exposure shall not exceed 100 square feet.

~~(b) *Number:* No more than one wall sign per street front exposure shall be maintained on any one parcel of property in any O Office District.~~

~~(c)~~(b) If ~~When~~ more than one wall sign is ~~permitted~~ erected on a building, each of the signs shall be constructed of the same materials and be of the same format to provide consistency and unity, subject to the review and approval of the Director.

### §153.504 – B1 and B2 Neighborhood Shopping District requirements.

(B) *Permitted signs.* All signs located in the B1 and B2 Neighborhood Shopping Districts shall conform to the specific requirements set forth in this Chapter. In any B1 or B2 Neighborhood Shopping Districts no sign shall be permitted except the following named signs:

(16) . Wall signs, in accordance with the provisions of § 153.242. In addition, no wall sign shall be erected or maintained in any B1 or B2 District unless it also meets all of the following requirements:

(a) *Area:* The total sign area of all signs on any single business shall not exceed one time the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted excepting that each legitimate business shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign surface area. The total sign surface area of all signs per any single wall sign business shall not exceed 100 square feet.

~~(b) Number: No more than one wall sign per street front exposure shall be maintained on any one business in any B1 or B2 District.~~

(e)(b) *Mixed signs prohibited:* No awning or canopy sign may be displayed in conjunction with a wall, or projecting sign.

#### § 153.505 - B3, B4 and B4A Community Shopping District requirements.

(B) *Permitted signs.* All signs located in the B3, B4 and B4A Community and Corridor Shopping Districts shall conform to the specific requirements set forth in this Chapter. In any B3, B4 and B4A Community and Corridor Shopping Districts no sign shall be permitted except the following named signs:

(19) Wall signs in accordance with the provisions set forth in § 153.242. In addition, no wall sign shall be erected or maintained in any B3, or B4 or B4A District unless it also meets all of the following requirements:

(a) Properties with a single tenant, and shared pedestrian access shopping centers:

(i) *Area:*

a. The total sign surface area of all wall signs on any single parcel of property shall not exceed one times the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted. The total sign surface area of any single awning, canopy or wall sign shall not exceed 100 square feet.

b. If ~~the wall signs is~~ are to be back a minimum of 120 feet from the nearest property line, then the total sign surface area of all wall signs on the single parcel of property shall not exceed two times the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted. The total sign surface area of a single wall sign shall not exceed 200 square feet.

c. If ~~the wall signs is~~ are to be back a minimum of 240 feet from the nearest property line, then the total sign surface area of all wall signs on the single parcel of property shall not exceed two times the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be

mounted. The total sign surface area ~~of a single wall sign~~ shall not exceed 300 square feet.

- d. If ~~the wall signs is~~ are to be back a minimum of 360 feet from the nearest property line, then the total sign surface area of all wall signs on the single parcel of property shall not exceed two times the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted. The total sign surface area of a single wall sign shall not exceed 400 square feet.

(ii) *Number:*

~~a. No more than one wall sign per street front exposure shall be maintained on any parcel of property.~~

- ~~b.~~ If the building is set back a minimum of 120 feet or more from the property line which the signs shall face, then ~~one~~ an additional ~~secondary wall sign shall be permitted, not to exceed 50 percent of the area of the primary sign~~ surface area shall be permitted in the form of an additional sign.

(b) Properties with multiple tenants (other than shared pedestrian access shopping centers):

(i) *Area:*

a. If a tenant's wall signs ~~is~~ are less than 120 feet from the nearest property line, then the total surface area ~~of that sign~~ shall not exceed one times the lineal front footage of the tenant space, excepting that each tenant shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign surface area. The total sign surface area ~~of any such wall sign~~ shall not exceed 100 square feet.

- b. If a tenant's wall signs ~~is~~ are equal to or more than 120 feet but less than 240 feet from the nearest property line, then the total sign surface area ~~of that sign~~ shall not exceed two times the lineal front footage of the tenant space, excepting that each tenant shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign surface area. The total sign surface area ~~of any such wall sign~~ shall not exceed 200 square feet.

- c. If a tenant's wall signs ~~is~~ **are** equal to or more than 240 feet but less than 360 feet from the nearest property line, then the total surface area ~~of that sign~~ shall not exceed two times the lineal front footage of the tenant space, excepting that each tenant shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign surface area. The total sign surface area ~~of any such wall sign~~ shall not exceed 300 square feet.
- d. If a tenant's wall signs ~~is~~ **are** equal to or more than 360 feet from the nearest property line, then the total sign surface area ~~of that sign~~ shall not exceed two times the lineal front footage of the tenant space, excepting that each tenant shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign surface area. The total sign surface area ~~of any such wall sign~~ shall not exceed 400 square feet.

(ii) *Number:*

- a. ~~Interior tenants shall be permitted to have one wall sign.~~
- b. Exterior tenants shall be permitted to have ~~up to two wall signs,~~ one time the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted. ~~with no more than one sign per wall. Each sign~~ Signs shall face either a parking lot which serves the tenant or a street on which the tenant's parcel has frontage.

#### § 153.506 - B5 Central Business District requirements.

(B) *Permitted signs.* All signs located in the B5 Central Business District shall conform to the specific requirements set forth in this Ordinance. In any B5 Central Business District no sign shall be permitted except the following named signs:

- (18) Wall signs, in accordance with the provisions of § 153.242. In addition, no wall sign shall be erected or maintained in any B5 Central Business District unless it also meets all of the following requirements:
  - (a) *Mixed signs prohibited:* No wall sign may be displayed in conjunction with a projecting, awning or canopy sign.
  - (b) *Area:* The total sign area of all wall signs on any single parcel of property, shall not exceed one time the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted excepting that each legitimate business shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign

surface area. The total sign surface area of all signs ~~any single wall sign~~ shall not exceed 50 square feet.

~~(c) Number: No more than one wall sign per street front exposure shall be maintained on any one business in any B5 District.~~

~~(d)~~(c) *Floor of occupancy:* No business establishment shall display a wall sign unless that establishment occupies space on the first (street level) floor of the building.

#### § 153.507 - I Industrial District requirement.

(B) *Permitted signs.* All signs located in an I Limited Industrial District shall conform to the specific requirements set forth in this Ordinance. In an I Limited Industrial District, no sign shall be permitted except the following named signs:

(11) Wall signs, in accordance with the provisions set forth in § 153.242. In addition, no wall sign shall be erected or maintained in any I District unless it also meets all of the following requirements:

(a) *Properties with a single tenant:*

(i) *Area:* The total sign surface area of all wall signs on any single parcel of property shall not exceed one and one-half times the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted. The total sign surface area ~~of any single wall sign~~ shall not exceed 120 square feet.

~~(ii) Number: No more than one wall sign per street frontage exposure shall be maintained on any one parcel of property in any I District.~~

(b) *Properties with multiple tenants:*

(i) *Area:*

a. The total sign surface area of all wall signs displayed by a single tenant shall not exceed one times the lineal front footage of the tenant space, excepting that each tenant shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign surface area. The total sign surface area ~~of any such wall sign~~ shall not exceed 100 square feet.

(ii) *Number:*

~~a. Interior tenants shall be permitted to have one wall.~~

b.a. Exterior tenants shall be permitted to have up to two wall, with no more than one sign per wall one time the lineal front footage per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted. Each sign ~~Signs~~ shall face either a parking lot which serves the tenant or a street on which the tenant's parcel has frontage.

#### § 153.508 - B5A Downtown Perimeter District requirements.

(B) *Permitted signs.* All signs located in the B5A District shall conform to the specific requirements set forth in this Chapter. In any B5A District no sign shall be permitted except the following named signs:

(19) Wall signs, in accordance with the provisions of § 153.242. In addition, no wall sign shall be erected or maintained in any B5A District unless it also meets all of the following requirements:

(a) *Mixed signs prohibited:* No wall sign may be displayed in conjunction with a projecting, awning or canopy sign.

(b) *Area:* The total sign area of all wall signs on a single parcel of property, shall not exceed one time the lineal front footage of the property per façade of street front exposure upon which the sign or signs are to be mounted excepting that each legitimate business shall be entitled to a minimum of 25 square feet of sign surface area. The total sign surface area of all signs ~~any single wall sign~~ shall not exceed 50 square feet.

~~(c) *Number:* No more than one wall sign per street front exposure shall be maintained on any one business in any B5A District.~~

~~(d)~~(c) *Floor of occupancy:* No business establishment shall display a wall sign unless that establishment occupies space on the first (street level) floor of the building.

#### DEFINITIONS

#### §153.602 DEFINITIONS

*Sign, area of:*

(1) *Freestanding.* The area of a freestanding or projecting sign shall have only one face (the largest one) of any double or multi-faced sign counted in calculating its area. Pole covers and other embellishments shall not be included in the area of measurement if they do not bear advertising copy. The area of the sign shall be measured as follows if the sign is composed of one or two individual cabinets:



- (a) The area around and enclosing the perimeter of each rectangular shape which can wholly enclose the cabinet or module shall be summed and then totaled to determine the total area.
- (b) If the sign is composed of more than three sign cabinets or modules, the smallest rectangular shape which can wholly enclose the entire perimeter of all cabinets and/or modules shall constitute the area of the sign.

(2) *Wall/awning/canopy signs:*

- ~~(a) If the sign is composed of individual letters or symbols using the wall, awning, or canopy as the background with no added decoration, the total sign area shall be calculated by measuring the area within a single, continuous perimeter composed of any straight line geometric figure which encloses the extreme limits of the advertising message.~~
- ~~(b) If the sign is composed of one or more sign cabinets or modules, the area enclosing the entire perimeter of all cabinets and/or modules within a single, continuous geometric figure shall be the area of the sign.~~  
Sign area shall be measured using the area of the smallest straight line geometric feature which can wholly enclose the surface area of the sign. In the event that the individual words or insignias of a wall sign are attached directly to the wall and vary significantly in size, sign area may be calculated using the smallest straight line geometric feature per word or insignia.

## **STANDARDS FOR TEXT AMENDMENTS**

1. *The degree to which the proposed amendment has general applicability within the Village at large and not intended to benefit specific property;*

The proposed text amendment is generally applicable to all wall signs and is not property specific in any way.

2. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the objectives of this ordinance and the intent of the applicable zoning district regulations;*

The intent of the proposed text amendment is to allow increased flexibility in the design and arrangement of words and graphics within the maximum allowable square footage permitted for a wall sign. No changes to any of the formulas for calculating the maximum allowable square footage permitted for a wall sign are proposed.

3. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would create nonconformity;*

Staff is unaware of any existing legal conforming uses that would be made nonconforming by the proposed text amendment.

4. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would make this ordinance more permissive;*

The proposed text amendment neither increases nor decreases the permissiveness for the size of signs but rather increases the permissiveness of calculating the area of a sign's actual text and graphics.

5. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan; and*

The proposed text amendment would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as the change is simply an update to more clearly regulate an emerging market based on new technology.

6. *The degree to which the proposed amendment is consistent with village policy as established in previous rulings on petitions involving similar circumstances.*

The Village has a history of amending its Sign Ordinance to address evolving circumstances presented by petitioners or by recognizing a desire to amend the code to address desired code regulations. The proposed amendments are consistent with established Village policy in this regard.

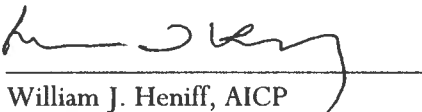
### **FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff finds the proposed text amendment to be consistent with the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed text amendment is also consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan in general.

Based on the above findings, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee has reviewed the petition and finds that it meets the standards required by the Zoning Ordinance. As such, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee recommends that the Plan Commission make the following motion recommending **approval** of this petition:

Based on the submitted petition and the testimony presented, the requested text amendment **complies** with the standards required by the Village of Lombard Zoning Ordinance; and, therefore, I move that the Plan Commission accept the findings and recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Report as the findings of the Plan Commission and I recommend to the Corporate Authorities **approval** of PC 15-03.

Inter-Departmental Review Committee Report approved by:



William J. Heniff, AICP  
Director of Community Development

c. Petitioner

H:\CD\WORDUSER\PCCASES\2015\PC 15-03\PC 15-03\_IDRC Report.docx