

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Zoning Code Text Amendment

Date: December 14, 2009

Initiator of Amendment: Council Member Schiff

Date of Introduction at City Council: August 14, 2009

Ward: All

Planning Staff and Phone: Hilary Dvorak, (612) 673-2639

Intent of the Ordinance: The purpose of the amendment is to make corrections to the recently revised zoning code and building code provisions related to on-premise signs.

Appropriate Section(s) of the Zoning Code: Chapter 543: On-Premise Signs and Chapter 544: Off-Premise Advertising Signs & Billboards.

Appropriate Section(s) of the Building Code: Chapter 109: Billboards.

Background: On-premise sign regulations are established to allow effective signage appropriate to the planned character of each zoning district, to promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion, to minimize adverse effects on nearby properties and to protect the public health, safety and welfare. In July of this year a comprehensive revision related to the on-premise sign regulations in the zoning code was adopted by the City Council. After the amendment was codified staff noticed that small errors were made that need to be corrected. This amendment is meant to correct those errors.

Purpose for the Amendment:

What is the reason for the amendment?

What problem is the Amendment designed to solve?

What public purpose will be served by the amendment?

What problems might the amendment create?

In July of this year a comprehensive revision related to the on-premise sign regulations in the zoning code was adopted by the City Council. After the amendment was codified staff noticed that small errors were made that need to be corrected. This amendment is meant to correct those errors. Also, Chapter 109, which deals with billboard permitting, installation and maintenance, is part of the City's Building Code. However, since the Planning Division is responsible for the permitting, installation and maintenance of billboards, staff is recommending that Chapter 109 be repealed and that the pertinent references be incorporated into Chapter 544, Off-Premise Advertising Signs & Billboards of the zoning code.

The amendment is designed to resolve potential issues arising from errors in the zoning code.

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The amendment will serve the public purpose by eliminating errors. A clearer zoning code is easier to administer and enforce and is more easily understood by the public.

Staff does not anticipate any problems with adopting this text amendment.

Timeliness:

Is the amendment timely?

Is the amendment consistent with practices in surrounding areas?

Are there consequences in denying this amendment?

The Planning Division believes that the amendment is timely because correcting errors in the zoning code should be done as soon as possible.

While no specific research has been undertaken to see how often other municipalities make housekeeping changes to their zoning code, it is certain that they take steps to rectify any errors in their zoning code as soon as is feasible.

The consequences of denying the amendment would be that the current errors in the zoning code regulations governing on-premise signs would remain.

Comprehensive Plan:

How will this amendment implement the Comprehensive Plan?

The following Urban Design policies of The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth apply:

10.20 Promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion caused by a proliferation of signage.

Applicable Implementation Steps

- 10.20.1 Location, size, height and spacing of off-premise advertising signs and billboards shall be regulated to minimize their visual blighting effects.
- 10.20.2 Master sign plans shall be submitted for multi-tenant buildings to ensure a complementary relationship between signage and the architecture of a building.
- 10.20.3 Develop incentives for exceptional sign design and style, including a special review process to ensure appropriate location, size, height and compatible design to the architecture of the building and other signage.
- 10.20.4 Develop a consistent, city-wide wayfinding signage design and maintenance plan for neighborhoods, trails, etc.

10.21 Unique areas and neighborhoods within the city should have a special set of sign standards to allow for effective signage appropriate to the planned character of each area/neighborhood.

Applicable Implementation Steps

- 10.21.1 Supporting the regional draw of Downtown entertainment areas, larger scale signage shall be allowed in appropriate places (such as the Hennepin Avenue Downtown Entertainment Area and Nicollet Mall Overlay District).
- 10.21.2 To promote street life and activity, signs should be located and sized to be viewed by people on foot (not vehicles) in order to preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of commercial areas that have traditional urban form.
- 10.21.3 Encourage effective signage that is appropriate to the character of the city's historic districts and landmarks, and preserves the integrity of historic structures.

The policies and implementation steps related to signage call for signs that relate to the pedestrian scale and character of the City's different commercial areas, master sign plans for multi-tenant buildings and signs that are of a higher quality and design. The proposed amendments to the on-premise sign regulations will help implement the recently adopted policies

Recommendation of the Community Planning and Economic Development--Planning Division:

The Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt the above findings and **approve** the zoning code text amendment, amending chapters 543 and 544 and **approve** the building code text amendment, amending chapter 109.