

# WOODSTOCK SIGN REGULATIONS SUMMARY

Sign regulations for the City of Woodstock are contained in Chapter 13 of the Woodstock Unified Development Ordinance. A copy of this ordinance is available online at [www.woodstockil.gov](http://www.woodstockil.gov). **This booklet is designed to address the most common signage projects. There are various provisions and exceptions that are not included in this document and sign decisions should not be made based on this document, alone. No sign should be ordered until the Building & Zoning Department confirms that the sign will comply with all City regulations.** The Woodstock Building & Zoning Department is located at 121 W. Calhoun St. (City Hall); the phone number 815/338-4305; email is [bandzdept@woodstockil.gov](mailto:bandzdept@woodstockil.gov).

## SIGNAGE OVERVIEW

Signs should reflect the context of the building's location.

Signs should be integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color, texture, and lighting, so that they are complementary to the overall design of the building.

Signs must not obscure architectural features of a building.

All signs must be professional in quality and design and must be maintained in good condition.

## PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following signs are among the types of signs generally prohibited within the city limits of Woodstock:

- ☞ Off premises signs;
- ☞ Portable or moveable signs including trailered signs;



- ☞ Signs which revolve, rotate, move or give the appearance of movement;
- ☞ Signs attached to any tree, fence, fire escape, bush, or utility pole, or located within a public right of way;
- ☞ Signs painted directly on a building;
- ☞ Roof signs;
- ☞ Signs that flash or scroll or which give the illusion of flashing or scrolling;
- ☞ Signs which imitate or resemble official traffic signs or bear words such as "stop", "slow down", or "caution".

## SIGN PERMITS

Sign permits are required for the installation of most temporary and permanent signs including the replacement of a sign face in an existing sign cabinet and the replacement of a directory panel. Permits are obtained from the City of Woodstock Building & Zoning Department at 121 W. Calhoun Street. Permit applications are included in this document. Sign permit review time is typically less than 10 working days.

## EXEMPT SIGNS

Permits are not required for regulatory signs, however the signs must meet certain sign ordinance requirements. The following signs are examples of exempt signs.

- ☞ Land use regulatory signs, such as "no parking" signs, may not exceed 1.5 sq. ft. in area and must be located on private property.

- 👍 Residential garage/yard sale signs may be installed no sooner than 12 hours prior to a sale and may be up to 6 sq. ft. in area. Signage is only allowed on the premises where the sale is conducted.
- 👍 Temporary window signs may be installed inside the building.
- 👍 All window signs outside the historic district are exempt from permitting, but may not cover more than 50 percent of the area of the window.
- 👍 Political campaign signs, not exceeding 16 sq. ft. in area and 4 ft. in height, may be installed no sooner than 60 days prior to an election and must be removed within 48 hours after an election. Political campaign signs may not be located in the public right of way.
- 👍 Temporary real estate signs, not exceeding 6 sq. ft. in area in residential zoning districts and not exceeding 16 sq. ft. in area in business and manufacturing zoning districts may be installed on private property. One sign is allowed per property frontage. (Off premises real estate signs which point to property for sale are prohibited.)



- 👍 Signs located within a site, not visible from a public or railroad right of way or residential zoning district do not require a permit..
- 👍 Directional wall, ground or projecting signs, however the message on the sign must be limited to the minimum information necessary to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian activity.



Directional ground signs may be up to 10 sq. ft. in area and 4 ft. in height.

## TEMPORARY SIGNS

A temporary sign may not be installed on public right of way, on a roof, or in a required parking space. A sign must be placed so as not to obstruct sight lines for vehicles and pedestrians on public or private property. Temporary sign permits are required for the following types of signs:

**EXTRAORDINARY PROMOTIONAL SIGNS** are for promotional displays for up to 60 days per year. A business may obtain one Extraordinary Promotional sign permit each year. Two signs may be displayed for 60 consecutive days or up to 4 shorter periods of time. (\$30.00 permit fee) A promotional sign may be a ground or wall mounted banner of up to 64 square feet in area, a pair of pole mounted banners, each not to exceed 15 sq. ft., an a-frame or sandwich sign of up to 16 sq. ft., a free standing sign constructed of wood, metal or other durable material up to 32 sq. ft in area and 8 ft. in height, pennants, or an inflatable balloon with a maximum longest or widest dimension of 12 feet. (\$30.00 permit fee)

**SIDEWALK SIGNS:** A business which has no alternative location for a permanent ground sign on private property may display one sidewalk sign that is oriented to pedestrians, not motorists. A sidewalk sign may be up to 6 sq. ft in area and should be between three and four feet in height. A sidewalk sign must be professionally prepared and maintained in good condition. Dry erase boards and chalkboards are not permitted unless they are within a decorative frame. The sign message shall be related to the goods and services sold on the premises. Changeable copy lettering is not allowed. Sidewalk sign design guidelines will be developed specifically for sidewalk signs in the historic district. (\$30.00 annual permit fee)



**GRAND OPENING SIGN:** A business may display two grand opening banner signs and one advertising flag per light pole, up to a limit of six light poles. The maximum area of a wall or ground mounted banner is 64 sq. ft. for 21 days. (\$10.00 permit fee, per sign)

**CONSTRUCTION SIGN:** A construction sign identifies contractors, professional firms and financing associated with a project. A construction sign in a residential zoning district may be up to 16 sq. ft in area; a construction sign in business or manufacturing zoning district may be up to 32 sq. ft. in area. Permit is valid for one year and is renewable. (\$50.00 permit fee)

**REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT SIGN:** One real estate development sign is allowed for a development in any zoning district, consisting of 5 or more lots or units, or a parcel of land having 2 or more acres. The sign may contain the name of the representative or real estate agency, logo and telephone number, a brief description of the zoning and number of lots or units available. A real estate sign may be up to 32 sq. ft. in area and a permit is good for one year. (\$50.00 permit fee)

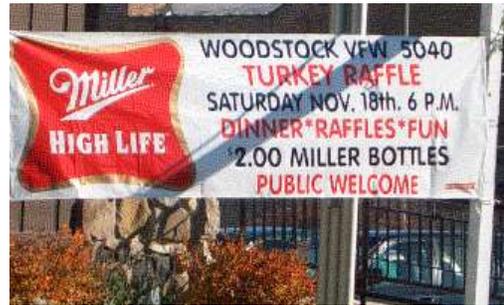
**FUTURE LOCATION SIGN:** One future location sign may be used to announce the name of a future establishment. This sign is allowed for 6 months and may be renewed building permit has been issued. The maximum sign size is based on the maximum allowable size for an equivalent permanent sign. (\$30.00 permit fee)

**TEMPORARY IDENTIFICATION SIGN:** One sign announcing the formal name and secondary information about an establishment may be permitted for 60 days or until an approved permanent sign is installed. (\$10.00 permit fee)

**EVENT:** One sign may be located on each side of a lot or parcel or on the face of building which has frontage on a public street. An event sign may be used to identify an organization's name, the name of the event, and the dates and time of the event. An event sign may be displayed 21 days prior to the event and may have a maximum area of 32 square feet (\$10.00 permit fee) and shall be removed within 48 hours of the event.

**NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN SIGN:** Temporary signs, not exceeding 32 square feet in area, may be placed on private properties

in non-residential zoning districts, for not more than 45 days in any twelve month period. A maximum of one sign is allowed on any zoning lot. Fundraising campaign signs may be off-premises, but not in a public



right of way. A permit is required for each sign. (\$10.00 per sign permit fee)

### PERMANENT SIGNAGE CONCEPTS:

#### INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGNS

When a sign is internally illuminated, the translucent message shall not exceed 40 percent of the total area of the sign. The remaining area shall have an opaque background. An 100 percent translucent box may be used in conjunction with channel letters, when the illuminated portion of the entire sign does not exceed 40 percent of the total area of a rectangle drawn around the entire sign.



#### ITEMS OF INFORMATION

The Sign Control Ordinance limits the number of "items of information" that a business may display to 10 items for each public street or highway frontage, up to a maximum of 20 items for the entire property. An item of information is a word, abbreviation, phone number, registered trade mark, symbol or geomagnetic shape.

#### WALL SIGNS

Permanent wall signs should conform to overall signage plans for the building or development where they are located. A wall sign is a sign which utilizes a flat background with a decorative and/or raised border, an enclosed "box" individual letter forms or a combination thereof, applied directly to the exterior wall of a building.

A wall sign should be mounted in a location that respects the building design. It must not obscure features such as pilasters, recesses, windows, ornamental brickwork or decorative trim.

One wall sign may be displayed on any wall containing an architecturally emphasized public entrance or which fronts on a public street.

The size of the sign is based on the signable area of the building and the length of the building or storefront. The signable area is the area of a triangle or rectangle on the wall of a building within which the sign will be located. Signable area is uninterrupted by doors windows, light fixtures, bracing, or other architectural features or decorative elements.



The size of the primary wall sign is the lesser of the signable area or the area that results from multiplying the length of the building or storefront by 1.5. Signs on other sides of the building that also contain a public entrance or face a public street are the lesser of the signable area, or the area that results from multiplying the length of the façade by 1.5.

Large buildings, outside the historic district, with architectural fronts that are at least 125 feet in length, may display one primary sign and four secondary signs on the same façade. The size of the secondary signs must be at less than 50 percent of the area, and 50 percent of the vertical dimension of the primary sign. The sum total area of all signs on the façade may not exceed 1.5 times the length of the building.

The maximum area of wall signs on any building shall not exceed 800 square feet.

## PERMANENT GROUND SIGNS

One permanent ground sign is allow on each multiple family zoned parcel and for each business or manufacturing zoning lot or parcel. A ground sign may be a monument sign or a pole mounted sign. The size of the sign is based on property frontage width and sign setback as specified on the table below.

The height of the sign is measured from grade at the centerline of the street. The area is the entire area within a single continuous perimeter which encloses the lettering, representations, emblems or other figures together with any material or color which forms an integral part of the a display or is used to differentiate a sign from the background against which it is placed. Only one side of double faced sign is included in calculating surface area.

At a very minimum, all ground signs must be at least two feet from a right of way line, five feet from a side lot line, and 40 feet from ground signs on adjoining property.

**Table 13.1: Basic Design Factors for Ground Signs**

Zoning District	Min. Front	Minimum Sign Setback															
		2 feet		5 feet		10 feet		15 feet		20 feet		25 feet		30 feet			
		area	height	area	height	area	height	area	height	area	height	area	height	area	height		
R-4	50 ft.	12	6	14	6	16	7	18	7	20	8	22	8	24	9		
B-1	70 ft.	18	9	22	10	26	11	30	12	34	13	38	14	42	15		
B-2		30	8	34	9	39	9	43	10	50	10						
B-2C	80 ft.	22	10	26	11	30	12	34	13	38	14	42	15	46	16		
B-3		35	8	40	9	43	10	49	10	53	11						
B-4	90 ft.	26	11	30	12	34	13	38	14	42	15	46	16	50	17		
B-5		40	8	45	9	49	10	54	11	57	12						
M-1	100+ ft.	30	12	34	13	38	14	42	15	46	16	50	17	54	18		
M-2		46	8	50	9	55	10	59	11	63	12						
B-5	200 ft.					58	15	64	16	70	17	76	18	82	19		
M-1	300 ft.					68	10	74	11	80	12	86	13	93	14		
M-2	500 ft.							98	12	104	13	110	14	117	15		
										108	19	112	20	120	21		
										116	16	120	17	128	18		

NOTE: If two numbers are given in any column, the user is given the option of having more height and less area or vice versa.

Step 1—Determine zoning district and minimum frontage (two left vertical columns)  
 Step 2—Determine minimum sign setback (top horizontal row)  
 Step 3—Determine maximum area and height allowed based on the intersection of the horizontal and vertical row.

## DIRECTORY GROUND SIGNS

A directory sign is intended to identify the official name of a building or development and provide a directory of occupants. A directory sign may be a wall, window, projecting or ground sign.

The maximum area of a ground directory sign is the same as the permitted on ground sign table 13.2 plus an

additional 10 percent for each establishment, but the total area of the sign may not exceed 150 percent of the allowable ground sign area. Internally illuminated directory sign panels must have opaque backgrounds.



### PROJECTING SIGNS

A single projecting sign may be displayed at each public entrance to an establishment which fronts on a public street. If a business does not have a public entrance fronting a public street, one projecting sign may be displayed on a wall which does front a public street.



A projecting sign can have a maximum area of 9 square feet and must be pinned from the wall at least 6 inches. The highest point on the sign must not extend above the windowsill of a second story window or a height of 16 feet, whichever is lower.

### PERMANENT CANOPY AND AWNING SIGNS

Signage on a canopy is limited to the side of the canopy which fronts a public street and may not exceed 50 percent of the total area of that side of the canopy which is available for signage.

The total area of an awning sign can not exceed 50 percent of the awning. If internally illuminated, the awning background shall be a subdued color. Historic Preservation Commission may be required for illuminated awnings in the historic district.



### PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE

A business may display one non-illuminated sign, not more than 1.5 square feet in area, if a building and awning or canopy design prevent pedestrians from seeing the principal sign. The pedestrian sign may be hung under an awning, if there is at least 8 feet of clearance above the public sidewalk, or the sign may be flush mounted on a wall near a pedestrian entrance. The sign must be coordinated with other signage for the business and may contain a maximum of three "items of information."

### PERMANENT WINDOW SIGNS OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Permanent window signs may not cover more than 50 percent of the area of the window. Signs that flash or otherwise create a distraction for motorists are prohibited. A permit is not required.

### PERMANENT WINDOW SIGNS IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Windows signs in the historic district may cover up to 25 percent of the total area of the window if they consist of individual letters, numerals, or other symbols.



Window signs that combine letters, numbers or symbols with opaque objects, logos or images or any type of

background, may not exceed 15 percent of the total area of the window. A permit is required.

### CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

One changeable copy message reader-board or LED sign is permitted per zoning lot, building site or shopping center, outside the historic district. The changeable message area must be an integral part of the primary sign and may be no larger than 35 percent of the total sign area. The number of items of information is reduced by two, for a business utilizing a changeable message sign.

A changeable copy reader-board sign must have a dark opaque background and utilize a reverse changeable clear letter system if internally illuminated. The reverse letters or numerals must be at least 6 inches, but no more than 8 inches in height.



LED message center signs may only utilize a single color for letters and numbers on a dark background. The sign may not flash, scroll, or be animated and the message should change no more frequently than once every four hours

### SIGNS IN DOWNTOWN BUSINESS HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISTRICT

Signs located within the Historic Downtown Business Preservation District must meet the following standards which are excerpted from the **National Park Service's Preservation Brief # 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs:**

A. Signs should be viewed as part of an overall graphics system for the building. They do not have to do all the "work" by themselves. The building's form,

name and outstanding features, both decorative and functional, also support the advertising function of a sign. Signs should work with the building, rather than against it.



**Historic District**

- B. New signs should respect the size, scale and design of the historic building. Features or details of the building will suggest a motif for new signs.
- C. Sign placement is important and new signs should not obscure significant features of the historic building. Signs above a storefront should fit within the historic signboard, for example.
- D. New signs should respect neighboring buildings. They should not shadow or overpower adjacent structures.
- E. Sign materials should be compatible with those of the historic building. Materials characteristic of the building's period and style, used in contemporary designs, can be used to form effective new signs.
- F. New signs should be carefully attached to the building to prevent damage to historic fabric and to ensure pedestrian safety. Fittings should penetrate mortar joints rather than brick, for example, and sign loads should be properly calculated and distributed.

**Internally illuminated box signs and illuminated channel letters are not allowed on facades facing the following streets: Johnson, Cass, Benton, Main, Dean (north of Calhoun), Judd (between Benton and Jefferson), and Jackson between Throop and Jefferson.**