

CHAPTER 17: SIGN CODE

10-17-1: GENERAL PROVISIONS, TITLE: SIGN CODE

10-17-4: DEFINITIONS:

The following listed specific words and terms are defined as follows:

ANIMATED SIGN: Any sign or part of a sign which changes physical position by movement or rotation, or gives the illusion of such change of position, or any changeable copy sign.

ARCADE SIGN: A wall or projecting sign attached to the roof or wall of an arcade and totally within the outside limits of the structural surfaces which are delineating the arcade.

AWNING: A movable shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building and of a type which can be retracted, folded or collapsed against the face of the supporting building.

BANNER: Any flexible material, such as cloth, plastic, vinyl, paper, cardboard or thin metal, with or without a message, attached outdoors to a building, structure or mounting device, or attached indoors to a building, structure or mounting device so as to be visible from the exterior of a building or structure, and used for the purpose of attracting attention.

BILLBOARD: A permanent sign structure in a fixed location which meets any one or more of the following criteria: a) it is used for the display of offsite commercial messages; b) the message display area, or any part thereof, is made available to message sponsors other than the owner(s) or operator(s) of the sign, typically for a fee or other consideration, i.e., general advertising for hire; c) the sign is a principal or secondary use of the land, rather than an appurtenant, accessory or auxiliary use serving some other principal use of the land.

BUILDING CODE: The building code of the city of Littleton as adopted by the city council, including such codes as may be in the future so adopted.

BUILDING FRONT: The horizontal, linear dimension of that side of a building which abuts a street, a parking area, a mall, or other circulation area open to the general public; and having either a main window display of the enterprise or a public entrance to the building. (In industrial districts a building side with an entrance open to industrial employees shall also qualify as a building frontage.)

BUILDING OFFICIAL: The city manager or authorized representative charged with the administration of this chapter.

BULLETIN BOARD: A device where members of the public may post notices of public events.

CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN: A sign displaying a message that may be changed by means of movable letters, slats, lights, light emitting diodes, or movable background material. Signs utilizing digital or dynamic display or changeable electronic variable message (CEVM) are all within this definition.

COMMERCIAL MASCOT: A person or animal costumed or decorated to function as a commercial advertising device. Includes "sign twirlers", "sign clowns", "human sandwich boards", and persons or animals holding or supporting any sign or advertising device displaying commercial speech or conveying a commercial message. The definition also applies to robotic devices intended to simulate a live person and/or animal.

COPY: The visually communicative elements, including, but not limited to, words, letters, numbers, designs, figures or other symbolic presentation incorporated into a sign with the purpose of attracting attention to the subject matter or message.

DEVELOPER DIRECTION SIGN: A third party sign used to give directions to a residential development area, which shall mean more than a single lot development.

DIGITAL OR DYNAMIC DISPLAY: Display methods utilizing LED (light emitting diode), LCD (liquid crystal display), plasma display, projected images, or any functionally equivalent technology, and which is capable of automated, remote or computer control to change the image, either in a "slide show" manner (series of still images), or full motion animation, or any combination of them.

DIRECTIONAL SIGN: Any sign that directs the movement or placement of pedestrian or vehicular traffic on a lot.

DISPLAY SURFACE OR FACE: The display surface is the area made available by the sign structure for the purpose of displaying, or drawing attention to, the communicative image.

DISTANCE OF SIGN PROJECTION: The distance from the exterior wall surface of the building to the outer extremity of a sign attached to a building.

ESTABLISHMENT: Any legal use of land, other than long term residential, which involves the use of structures subject to the building code. By way of example, and not limitation, this definition includes businesses, schools, hospitals, hotels and motels, offices and libraries, but does not include single-family homes or mobile homes. Multi-unit housing developments are considered establishments during the time of construction but individual multi-family units are not within the meaning of establishment once a certificate of occupancy has been issued and residency begins.

EXTERIOR WALL SURFACE: The most exterior part of a wall, sun screen or any screening or material covering a building.

FEATHER BANNER (also known as quill banner, feather flag, quill flag, or other similar names): An attention attracting device consisting of a pole with fabric attached, generally in the shape of a feather or quill. The definition applies regardless of whether there is any symbol, text or logo printed on the fabric.

FLAG: A piece of fabric or other flexible material, usually rectangular, of distinctive design, used as a symbol.

FLAGPOLE: A freestanding structure or a structure attached to a building/structure or to the roof of a building/structure and used for the purpose of displaying flags.

FLASHING SIGN: Any directly or indirectly illuminated sign either stationary or animated which exhibits changing natural or artificial light or color effects by any means whatsoever.

GRADE: The average elevation of the ground at the common boundary line of the street, and the property or sidewalk and property lines, not including common boundary lines with freeways.

GROUND SIGN: A sign supported by poles, uprights or braces extending from the ground or an object on the ground but not attached to any part of any building.

HUMAN SIGNS: A sign that is continuously held, spun, or attached to a person that advertises a business, commodity, service or product, including persons dressed as mascots.

ILLUMINATED SIGN: A sign lighted by or exposed to artificial lighting either by lights on or in the sign or directed toward the sign.

JOINT IDENTIFICATION SIGN: A sign which serves as a common or collective identification for two (2) or more establishments on the same lot or adjoining lots which use common entrances or parking facilities.

LOT: A tract, building site, parcel or portion of land separated from other parcels or portions by descriptions as on a subdivision or record of survey map, or by metes and bounds, for the purpose of sale, lease or separate use.

MARQUEE: A permanently roofed structure attached to and supported by a building, and projecting from the building.

MARQUEE SIGN: A sign attached to, painted on, erected against or extending from a marquee.

MURAL: A piece of artwork painted or applied directly on an exterior wall, ceiling or other permanent exterior surface. A distinguishing characteristic of mural painting is that the architectural elements of the given space are harmoniously incorporated into the picture. Images that are communicative in nature with the intent of communicating information about a product, service or event are a sign for purposes of this code.

NEW ESTABLISHMENT SIGN: A third party type sign used to advertise and give directions to a new or relocated establishment that has been located or established, within thirty (30) days of the request for the sign.

OFF PREMISE: A location other than the premises that contains a business, products or services not sold or offered to the public.

PERMANENT SIGN: Roof, marquee, arcade, wall, projecting or ground sign.

POLITICAL SIGNS: They shall be temporary and for a specified election and shall be removed within ten (10) days after the election to which the signs pertain.

PORTABLE SIGN: A sign that is not permanently affixed to a building, structure or the ground.

PORTABLE SIGN: A sign that is not permanently affixed to a building, structure or ground. Portable signs include but are not limited to sandwich board signs that are constructed in such a manner to form an “a” with sign face on each side, and intended to communicate specific information about the business that placed the sign.

PROJECTING SIGN: A sign other than a wall sign which projects from a wall or roof and is supported by a wall or roof of a building.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY: Streets, roadways, highways, alleys, sidewalks, paths, and all other areas or ways owned, dedicated, or conveyed to the public, to be used primarily for vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic.

ROOF SIGN: A sign erected upon or above the roofline or parapet of the building or structure, including all signs for which any portion of the support structure is attached to a roof.

ROOFLINE: The highest point on any building where an exterior wall encloses usable floor area including roof area provided for housing mechanical equipment.

ROTATING SIGN: A sign in which the sign itself or any portion of the sign moves in a revolving or similar manner. Such motion does not refer to methods of changing copy.

SAFETY CODES: Those codes, adopted by the city, which state rules for safe construction, including, by way of example and not limitation, building, electrical, grading, and demolition.

SIGN: Any visually communicative image placed on public display and visible from the exterior of any portion of the public right of way or place open to passage by the public. For the purpose of defining the regulatory scope of this chapter, the term "sign" does not include:

(A) Decorative or architectural features of buildings (not including lettering, trademarks or moving parts) which do not perform a communicative function, such as stripes around a building;

(B) Newsracks, newspaper vending devices, newsstands, automated teller machines(ATMs) and self-serve gasoline dispensing devices;

(C) Cornerstones and foundation stones;

(D) The legal use of fireworks, candles and artificial lighting not otherwise regulated by this chapter;

(E) Grave markers, gravestones, headstones, mausoleums, shrines, and other markers of the deceased;

(F) Interior graphics which are visual communicative devices that are located entirely within a building or other enclosed structure and are not visible from the exterior thereof;

(G) Manufacturers' marks on tangible products, which identify the maker, seller, provider or product, and which customarily remain attached to the product even after sale;

(H) Doormats, floor mats, welcoming mats and similar devices;

(I) Personal appearance, such as makeup, masks, wigs, costumes, jewelry, apparel and the like, unless it constitutes a commercial mascot;

(J) Searchlights used as part of a search and rescue or other emergency service operation (this exclusion does not apply to searchlights used as attention attracting devices for commercial or special events);

(K) Shopping carts, golf carts, horse drawn carriages, bicycles and similar devices, and properly licensed motorized vehicles that legally pass through the city.

SIGN PERMIT: A building permit that authorizes the erection, construction, enlargement, alteration, repair, moving, improvement, removal, conversion or demolition of any sign, issued pursuant to the building code of the city and this chapter.

SIGN STRUCTURE: All supports, uprights, braces and frame work of the sign but not including the communicative image.

STREET FRONT: Any boundary line of a lot or parcel of land that runs parallel to and within twenty feet (20') of the right of way of a street or highway designated and assigned an individual name or number by the legislative action of the city.

STREET PROPERTY LINE: A common boundary between private property and a dedicated street or alley.

SUBDIVISION ENTRANCE SIGN: A permanent sign installed at or near a public entrance to a development.

TEMPORARY SIGN: A sign that is constructed of lightweight or flimsy material, and is easily installed affixed to a building and removed using ordinary hand tools. Such signs include real estate "for sale," "for rent", and "open house" signs, garage sale signs, temporary signs identifying the architect, engineer or contractor for work currently under construction, on-site commercial messages, or temporary noncommercial messages including political, election, or ideological signs.

TIME AND/OR TEMPERATURE DEVICES: Signs consisting of devices which provide time and/or temperature information.

USE BY RIGHT: The primary permitted use or accessory use as defined by the zoning ordinance of the city. (See title 10 of this code.)

WALL SIGN: A sign attached to, painted on or erected against a wall of a building and whose display surface is parallel to the face of the building upon which the sign is attached.

WIND SIGN: Any sign in the nature of a series of two (2) or more banners, flags, pennants or other objects or material fastened in such a manner as to move upon being subjected to pressure by wind, breeze, or forced air. By way of example only, includes devices known by commercial names such as wind dancer and AirCrow.

WINDOW: For purposes of this chapter, a window shall be an opening in the wall of a building, said opening to be covered with glass or similar material for the purpose of admitting light and/or air.

WINDOW SIGN: A sign which is applied or attached to the interior of a window only, which sign can be seen through the window from the exterior of the structure.

10-17-6-2: SIGNS PROHIBITED AND SIGNS ALLOWED BY SPECIAL PERMIT:

(A) Signs Prohibited: The following signs shall not be permitted in any zone district:

1. Reserved- ~~Rotating signs~~.
2. Portable signs and portable sandwich board signs except as specifically permitted in subsection 10-17-6-5(C) of this chapter;
3. Roof signs; or roof illumination designed to illuminate signs located elsewhere on the building. A building element constructed to only contain a sign shall not be permitted;
4. Billboards, as defined in this chapter, except as specifically permitted in subsections 10-17-6-6(H) of this chapter;
5. Price signs at gasoline service stations except as authorized by subsection 10-17-6-5(F)4 of this chapter;
6. Other signs: No person shall erect any sign except as authorized by this chapter or other ordinance of the city and then only in accordance with the provisions thereof.

(B) Signs Allowed By Special Permit:

1. The following signs shall be allowed for an individual business located in any business, transitional, CA, or industrial zone district by special permit. Not more than two (2) four (4) permits may be issued each calendar year for a cumulative period of not more than sixty (60) one hundred and twenty (120) days.

- a. Hot air balloons and other types of lighter than air objects;
- b. Banners, feather banners or wind signs;
- c. Flags that are not the flag of the United States, any foreign nation, any state or political subdivision of the United States or political subdivision of this state or flag of a political entity having existed in the United States having historical or cultural significance.

(C) Portable sandwich board signs shall be allowed in accordance with the provisions of this code by special permit. The application for the permit shall be filed with the community development department, together with the required fee.

(D) Murals shall be allowed in accordance with the provisions of this code by special permit. The application shall be filed with the community development department together with the required fee.

(E) Subdivision Entrance Sign: one permanent subdivision entrance sign shall be allowed. In residential subdivisions, such sign shall be limited to a maximum size of twenty (20) square feet per display face and shall not exceed two (2) faces per sign. In commercial and industrial subdivisions, such sign shall be limited to a maximum size of fifty (50) square feet per display face and shall not exceed two (2) faces per sign.

(F) Signs inside display windows visible from the street that are designed to advertise the business as compared to merchandise or displays are not covered by this exception.

(G) Human signs:

1. May not exceed 2 feet by 4 feet in size;
2. May not block ingress and egress on any driveway entrance from a public or private street into a parcel;
3. May not obstruct the public sidewalk denying access to persons with disabilities;
4. Require an annual permit from the community development department;
5. May not be placed outside the limits established on the permit.

(H) Rotating Signs:

1. May not exceed 24 Inches in diameter.
2. Shall comply with all city lighting regulations.
3. Shall not have changeable electronic copy.
4. Shall only apply to permanent signs and is not allowed for temporary signs.
5. Must be permitted separately or as part of a sign package.
6. Shall Count against the maximum square footage for a project sign package.
7. Shall not project into the public right of way.