

Sign Regulations Update: Comments/responses on proposed sign regulations (updated 03/1/2012)

Comment	Response	Participant
<b>34.1 Purposes</b>		
It was suggested that the purposes were withheld from the public at the most recent public meeting.	The intent of the September public meeting was to share recommendations and obtain feedback at the policy level. Purposes were available for review at subsequent public meetings.	Citizen
The purposes are auto-oriented, yet visual clutter also hurts pedestrians (9/21)	Purposes will be edited to reflect both auto- and pedestrian-oriented purposes.	Citizen
Preamble should include language from the current ordinance preamble that cites signs as potential public nuisances	The purposes will be edited to incorporate this purpose.	Citizen Focus Group
<b>34.2 Applicability</b>		
Could there be a size bonus for creative signs? This could discourage cheap signs and encourage high quality innovative signs	Creativity would be a subjective measure. The draft attempts to incorporate flexibility in order to allow for creativity.	BIDs/ Partnerships
Would murals not on a wall (sidewalk, etc.) be permitted?	Staff has not proposed to allow murals on sidewalks. As drafted, anything painted on a window would be regulated as a sign, subject to the regulations for window signs, which permit at total area of up to 20% of the window, however, window sign regulations have been clarified to allow 20% of the window opening (rather than each pane of glass) in order to incorporate additional flexibility for window signs.	BIDs/ Partnerships
How is art on a window counted?		Brokers/ Property Managers
Would art [on a wall] related to a business be considered a sign?	Yes. As drafted, only art meeting defined standards would not be regulated as a sign. Proposed standards identify displays including any text, or symbols/graphics related to a business on the premises, as a sign, and therefore would be regulated under the sign ordinance.	Brokers/ Property Managers
If signs are not visible from the public ROW, is it regulated? Something that is not visible from the street (right of way) should not be regulated by the county (no matter what it is or where it is)	Yes, signs not visible from the ROW are regulated, except where specifically stated. Signs <i>inside</i> a building and not visible from the public ROW are not regulated.	Brokers/ Property Managers; Citizen Focus Group
<b>34.3 No Modifications</b>		
No modification to regulations is concerning. Ability to create a great sign would be limited and would like to see an avenue for requesting modifications, such as exceptions for designs of high quality. It is difficult to have an ordinance that is one-size-fits-all that also allows for special places	Staff has incorporated flexibility into the regulations in order to allow for creative signs within defined standards that would limit the need for interpretation by the Zoning Administrator, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminated the depth requirement for wall signs;</li> <li>• Incorporated flexibility for placement of signs on walls, awnings or canopies;</li> <li>• Removed restrictions on number of signs within permitted sign area.</li> </ul>	BIDs/ Partnerships
Other counties don't have the same objectives that encourage creativity and innovation, therefore the no modifications doesn't make sense—innovation can help to create a sense of place through signage. What works for one neighborhood in Arlington does not necessarily work for another.		Citizen Focus Group (10/27)

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<p>No modifications inhibits creativity, innovation—can't have it both ways. And invites varying interpretations from different zoning administrators. There needs to be a County Board process for appealing the decision of the Zoning Administrator. An analogy is the FBC, whereby the site plan process was retained for creative/bigger projects.</p>	<p>What has been eliminated is the ability to request additional sign area or request sign types that are specifically prohibited.</p> <p>However, staff has proposed some defined legislative review of signs [see3/6/2012 draft]</p>	<p>Citizen Focus Group (10/27)</p>
<p>Allow more vibrancy in design—concern that the proposed ordinance may create sterile signs especially given the lack of opportunity for modifications. The ability to create great signs is limited. Boston's signs were given as an example.</p>		<p>BIDs/ Partnerships</p>
<p>Concerns that there is no process for unique situations or signs to gain County Board approval</p>	<p>The draft attempts to anticipate each eventuality, However, the ordinance could be amended in the future if unanticipated sign types or unanticipated uses are identified.</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p>It is not complementary to have an ordinance that is broad enough to have flexibility and thorough enough to allow all signs administratively. Alternatively, have a sign expert, or sign advisory committee to make decisions about permitted signs.</p>	<p>Most jurisdictions in Virginia are not enabled to have design review boards (other than for historic preservation)</p>	<p>Citizen Focus Group (10/27)</p>
<p><b>34.3 No Modifications (process)</b></p>		
<p>There should be a document with principles, and the County Board should be able to determine whether or not a proposed sign meets the principles by either deciding they really like it and we want it, or it does not meet the principles, so we cannot approve it.</p>	<p>Staff is recommending that most signs be approved administratively.</p>	<p>Citizen Focus Group (10/27)</p>
<p>No modifications at all is not the only option. There are four levels of scrutiny available in a sign ordinance: 1) things we allow 2) thing we allow with permits 3) things we prohibit 4) things we allow with discretion. (9/21)</p>	<p>The administrative process proposed with incorporation of clear standards would offer the same creative and flexible alternatives to all applicants. The administrative process would also be more predictable for an applicant, as well as faster and easier to navigate than a discretionary process.</p>	<p>Public participant at ZOCO mtg</p>
<p>Development community would like to retain the option of requesting modifications to provisions from the County Board (9/21)</p>	<p>The intent of providing defined standards in the zoning ordinance is to create predictability so that businesses and other users of signs may know exactly what to expect to be able to install and neighbors may know exactly what they may expect to find installed on adjacent buildings.</p>	<p>Public participant at ZOCO mtg</p>
<p>Staff wants to simplify their job, which is why the no modification provision is being proposed; the proposed regulations are designed to cut out residents and prevent them from having input</p>		<p>Public Forum (Oct 19)</p>
<p>Residents do not want complete administrative approval. Things that work in one area in Arlington will not work in others. Special exceptions encourage dialogue between residents and applicants. If there is no process for review by the County Board, issues will not come to the County Board's attention.</p>	<p>However, staff has proposed some defined legislative review of signs [see3/6/2012 draft].</p>	<p>Public Forum (Oct 19)</p>

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Removing discretionary approval leaves no recourse for undesired signs. This is not the “Arlington Way”. People in live in Arlington because they have a voice in what happens in the County.	Response on previous page.	Public Forum (Oct 19)
Concerns that small businesses would be more affected by this provision than big developers because they don’t necessarily have the time, resources or knowledge to work the system		Chamber of Commerce
Any changes towards more flexibility from the old ordinance is great. The addition of A-frames and umbrella’s is excellent. I think that when things are spelled out completely, it will be difficult to find loopholes to do something different. Thus, if it is spelled out it needs to encompass the widest array possible. Having said that, please know that signage for 95% of businesses is pretty much straight forward and at present time, most items are covered in the Ordinance. It is financially driven. Small businesses cannot afford to do something truly out of the box that would need variances, etc. They just want to get the word out, be visible, and quickly. Larger corporations and national chains have a different need as their branding becomes much more of a territorial issue.		Sign Industry participant
Most stakeholders seem to want some kind of provision for appeal to address the 5-10% special cases. Why is staff recommending no modifications?		Public Forum (Oct 19)
It is not possible for staff and citizens to have full knowledge of what is going on when an applicant paints a picture of what their reality is. Citizens’ only recourse is the County Board (non-tax paying people seem to have more of a voice than citizens)		Citizen Focus Group (10/27)
An example of successful process – a business owner spoke with the resident, civic association worked with the resident and the business owner. A system of checks & balances was provided.		Public Forum (Oct 19)
Could either the Zoning Administrator or County Manager have control over a waiver of regulations?	No, the Zoning Administrator and County Manager do not have the authority to waive or make exceptions to zoning regulations.	Chamber of Commerce; Public Forum (Oct 19)
Residents should not have to wait until the full sign regulations come before the County Board, months from now in order to determine whether the no modifications provisions is appropriate	This issue continues to be under discussion	Public Forum (Oct 19)
<b>34.4 Signs Prohibited in all Districts</b>		
Signs projected onto surfaces may be appropriate for special events	Staff has not proposed to allow signs projected onto surfaces at this time.	BIDs/ Partnerships

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Would "sail" signs be permitted? What does it matter if things flap or blow or move on signs?	The purpose of prohibiting moving, flashing signs is to minimize potential traffic distractions. "Sail" signs and balloons would fit into the moving category, and would not be permitted under the proposed draft	Brokers/ Property Managers
Balloons/fabric waving in the wind is distracting (8/22/2011 Summary)		EDC/RTF
<b>34.5 Signs in single-family</b>		
Only one flag pole might be too restrictive; some people have one US flag and one other flag. Perhaps one pole should allow for separate lighting since the US flag must be lighted during evening hours or overnight.	Staff concurs. The current ordinance permits up to 6 flags and does not regulate flag poles. The draft has been revised to permit up to 6 flags and 3 poles and to allow the surface of the flag to be lighted.	Citizen
I recently was attempting to submit a sign permit application for a construction project in order to market our project with a site sign. I found out after reviewing Section 34 and speaking with Zoning officials, that it is illegal to place a sign on private residential property, with a single family home, greater than 4.5 sf. Many of the signs I see builders have placed in front yards are not in compliance. They are generally 20-32 sf	One of the stated purposes of the proposed regulations is to prohibit most signs with commercial messages in residential zoning districts. However, the proposed amendment would permit up to three temporary signs with commercial messages and up to 6.5 sf in size, within one-family zoning districts.	Builder
Inconsistency between page 11 and page 29 regarding traffic control signs [public draft 2]	The draft has been edited to resolve inconsistencies.	Public Forum participant (Oct 19)
<b>34.6 Signs in multifamily</b>		
There is no mention of rooftop or near rooftop signs in the RA districts section.	The proposed draft would not allow signs near the roofline in RA14-26, RA8-18, RA7-16, RA6-15 or in single-family districts, and in other zoning districts, signs near the roofline are proposed to be limited to buildings that are predominantly for commercial use.	Public Forum participant (Oct 19)
There is no height restriction for wall signs.	No height restriction is proposed for wall signs in multifamily residential zoning districts (RA14-26, RA8-18, RA7-16, RA6-15). The maximum sign size for wall signs in these districts would be 24 sf, which would naturally limit the maximum height at which it would be useful.	Public Forum participant (Oct 19)
<b>34.7 Signs in Mixed-use</b>		
How are signs for interior anchor stores in Crystal City accommodated? Calculating sign area based on linear frontage does not work for interior businesses.	The proposed regulations allow for approval of directory signs meeting defined standards, through a comprehensive sign plan, but does not propose to allow exterior signs for interior tenants	BIDs/ Partnerships
In Crystal City, while we do not necessarily want to see a lot of signs, it would be useful to have signs to identify interior retail (current ordinance only allows signs for exterior entrances)		Public Forum (Oct 19)
Calculation of linear frontage is not well-defined; Frontage definition could exclude too much (make putting signs on articulated buildings difficult)	Staff concurs, and has incorporated a proposed definition of building frontage in the definitions subsection (see 34.17)	Chamber of Commerce

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What is the significance of the 24-foot height limit for wall/rooftop signs?	There is a proposed 24-foot height limit that applies only to wall signs that are not included in a comprehensive sign plan, and is designed to limit wall signs to the first two floors of a building. Within a comprehensive sign plan, however, the current proposal (see 2/22/2012 draft) would allow for more flexibility in placement and size of signs, allowing signs to be placed on other areas of the building, and could include vertical signs.	Chamber of Commerce
There are no height restrictions for wall signs; this should be explored.		Public Forum (Oct 19)
Allow for vertical signs on tall structures		BIDs/ Partnerships
Would the freestanding signs (Harris Teeter) shown in the draft ordinance be allowed?	Staff will review all photos incorporated into the draft to ensure that examples are of conforming signs. Unified shopping centers, such as the shopping center where the Harris Teeter is located, are one of a few commercial uses that are currently permitted to have freestanding signs, however, staff will research whether or not that specific sign is conforming with proposed size standards.	Brokers/ Property Managers
My biggest issue are window graphics. As larger and/or multiple glass panels are incorporated into window bays as part of the façade structure, the possibilities are endless to really do some very creative work for all of the phases a location goes through and it is perhaps the most economical signage on the market. The 20% allowed coverage is completely limiting and the permit costs for a multi-panel sign is forbidding. It also locks out the possibility of tenants who may want some privacy behind the windows whether it is a doctor's office with treatment rooms or a storage room.	Staff continues to explore this issue with the goal of incorporating more flexibility into window sign provisions that are compatible with ground floor transparency policies. The current proposal (see 2/22/2012 draft) would allow up to 20% of the window area up to a maximum of 80 sf per sign, using the area between structural portions of the building (the window opening) as the area from which the 20% would be calculated.	Sign Industry
Occupied spaces with non-retail tenants should allow them to have some graphics on the window because some businesses need privacy so they pull the shades (frequently ugly) to provide the privacy – particularly where offices locate in retail spaces		BIDs/ Partnerships
20% calculation for window coverage is confusing and needs clarification.		Chamber of Commerce
Some creative ideas may need to be implemented to address “edge” areas where residential area are near mixed use areas and vice versa	Staff continues to explore this issue with regard to sign lighting, placement and proximity.	Public Forum (Oct 19)
Where's the provision for things like the Artisphere's banners that may have private sponsors?	Staff continues to research this issue.	BIDs/ Partnerships
DC downtown BID allows theatres to print banners for stage productions to promote cultural events	Staff continues to research this issue.	BIDs/ Partnerships
In 34.5, 34.6 and 34.7, reference to the “following table” is misleading, as there are many tables embedded in each of these subsections	Staff concurs, and has edited these subsections	Public participant at ZOCO meeting

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<b>34.7 Signs in Mixed-use (signs near the roofline)</b>		
Signs near the roofline have been greatly reduced in this draft. It is very important that signs are visible, especially with BRAC changes and the need to re-release buildings	Staff has drafted revised provisions that would address signs at the roofline as well as other signs placed at a height above 40 feet [see 3/6/2012 draft]  Sign area: multiple sign area options for signs at the roofline are included in this draft  Illumination: revised provisions address hours of illumination of lighted signs facing residential uses and facing the Monumental Core, Arlington Cemetery and George Washington Parkway. Several options are presented for review.	Public Forum (Oct 19)
Signs above 35 feet should be scrutinized differently from lower signs because the impact is larger		Public Forum (Oct 19)
Concerned about allowing rooftop signs altogether; especially when seen from National Park land/the National Mall/Arlington cemetery and residential areas (BAE sign is an example)		Public Forum (Oct 19)
The burden of proof of a rooftop sign is during the application process. There should be an appeals process to deal with the 2% of signs people have a problem with		Public Forum (Oct 19)
In general, Arlington residents are asked to accept extra density, traffic, people, and pollution in single family neighborhoods. Companies could use unique architecture instead of signs as way finding		Public Forum (Oct 19)
<b>34.8 Signs for Institutional Uses</b>		
What happens when there are two or more churches using the same building? (would be useful if County Board could modify)	Freestanding signs are permitted only for selected uses, including for institutional uses. Should there be multiple congregations using the same building, they could all be listed on the permitted freestanding sign, or could be included on other permitted signs.	Citizen Focus Group
Some suggested institutional signs should be permitted to have more than one identification sign; others disagreed		September Public Forum
Uses in residential neighborhoods may need to turn off sign lighting at night (8/22/2011 summary)	Staff is continuing to research lighting standards that will be included in the sign regulations	EDC/RTF
When we bought our home church across the street had a very discreet and tasteful externally lit sign. Later, that sign and other exterior lighting features were upgraded to much brighter lights. The sign itself was replaced with an internally lit sign which glows until late at night in all of our windows. This kind of "upgrade" should not be allowed, especially not in any residential area! It would be good for the new regulations to prevent this sort of thing (initial outreach comment)		Citizen
Temporary banners are not always associated with a particular date – make sure to tie in time permitted in other ways (8/22/2011 summary)	Staff concurs. Temporary sign provisions should include timeframes associated with events or maximum timeframes for those signs not associated with events.	Sign Industry
Unlimited temporary banners may be too many (8/22/2011 summary)	Staff will explore this further	Sign Industry
Churches should be allowed lawn signs on their own property.	The proposed draft would allow temporary signs, and does not preclude the use of lawn signs	September Public Forum

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I applaud the work to revise Arlington's signage ordinance. The decades long ordinance is unfriendly to businesses that make Arlington a destination and poses major problems for non-profits such as churches. I am hopeful that the final revised ordinance will allow churches more flexibility in signage on their own properties, including the use of A-frame signs to announce special events. (1/12/12)	The draft regulations would allow institutional uses (which include churches), the option to have signs permitted in the zoning district in which they are located, or sign types specifically permitted for institutional uses, which include temporary signs of up to a maximum of 7 sf on their property.	Citizen
Banners advertising community events have been confiscated	Institutional uses would be permitted to have temporary banners with noncommercial messages if they choose to use the institutional sign provisions; such signs could be used to publicize events occurring on the property	October Public Forum
<b>34.9 Signs in public right-of-way</b>		
Street fair vendor signs may be restricted	This can be further researched	BIDs/ Partnerships
Where do logos on things like trash cans and utilities fit?	At this time, staff has not proposed allowing signs on street furniture. Should such signs be desired in the future, the ordinance could be amended to accommodate them.	BIDs/ Partnerships
Street banners—more flexibility should be granted so that BIDs can continue their street banner programs; BID banners in the ROW—process should remain the same. These are seen as “sense of place” banners	Staff concurs. The proposed ordinance would not make any changes to regulations for banner systems in the public right-of-way. The County Board would retain the authority to authorize the Manager to place such banner systems.	BIDs/ Partnerships
Confused by 34.9.b—what are special revitalization areas? Why allow banners there? Create a special map to illustrate these areas and update as necessary	The existing reference is to the General Land Use Plan which identifies revitalization areas, however, this reference is being updated to more accurately reflect the areas in which banners are intended to be allowed	Public Forum (Oct 19)
We already have enough folks on phones, etc. not paying full attention to driving & we don't need more clutter to distract.	Proposed requirements for signs in the ROW are similar in placement and number to current provisions, however, the intent is to provide content-neutral regulations. A revised draft would limit commercial signs in these areas to temporary directional signs for activities lawfully occurring in residential zoning districts. [see 3/6/2012 draft]	Citizen
Please do not extend time real estate signs may be placed in medians.		Citizen
Real estate agents want all signs to be temporary—want to have signs on weekdays to help advertise the houses for sale and to have them out on the market for less time—difficult to sell to people when people don't know that the houses are for sale		Public Forum (Oct 19)
Only real estate signs should be allowed in the public right of way. If everyone can put a sign up, it creates lots of clutter; prefer no signs in the public ROW		The proposed amendment would continue to allow commercial signs in medians only on weekends
Real estate signs need to be farther than ½ mile from a house for sale, otherwise nobody will come; perhaps regulate by number of intersections	½ mile from the location of commercial activity is a reasonable distance. Others have suggested ¼ mile, which is also being considered.	Public Forum (Oct 19)

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I was just out by Tyson’s Corner, on Route 123, where the median strips are COVERED with political signs. Not just two per median, but one sign every 18” or so. Makes me wonder what Arlington will look like if we allow anyone to put signs on the public ROW, for any purpose.	Staff is not proposing to change the number political (noncommercial) signs permitted. The proposed amendment would continue to allow only two per candidate or ticket per median strip.	ZOCO member
Non-commercial messages on signs in the ROW could cause sign proliferation because political speech is not restricted to politics/elections	The amendment would, however, allow other noncommercial signs during the period 31 days prior to an election. Political speech is not currently limited to politics/elections.	Public Forum (Oct 19)
There is a discrepancy with the term right-of-way – some of the land in the County is State ROW, and other land is County ROW (9/27)	The County does not regulate state ROW.	Citizen
I would encourage you to amend the ordinance to allow signs not only for primaries, but also for caucuses held by duly constituted political parties (1/25/12)	Staff will continue to explore this issue.	Citizen
<b>34.9 Signs in public right-of-way (Civic Association Signs)</b>		
Most civic associations don’t have a building and an upcoming event may be in the public right-of-way (i.e. a block party) and require a special event permit. Include a banner permit with the special event application so the banner can be reviewed along with the special event permit	The proposed regulations include a provision to allow a banner across the ROW in designated locations for events permitted through a special event permit (see 34.9A.8 in Public Review Draft 2)	Public Forum (Oct 19)
A “missing dog” or “garage sale” sign would be illegal under the current and proposed ordinance. Such signs should be allowed with a date on the bottom of the flyer so it is known when it was posted	Staff continues to research this issue.  Temporary signs are allowed on lots in R-districts without permits, and could be used to publicize an upcoming civic association meeting.	Citizen Focus Group
Where do personal yard sale signs fit into this.	As drafted, the regulations would allow	Public Forum (Oct 19)
Civic associations want an opportunity to have legal signs or a reasonable size to publicize meetings. Arlington should look to other communities for how such signs are addressed.	institutional uses (which include churches and schools) to have temporary banners up to 7 sf in area. Such signs may also be used to publicize events occurring at the institution.	Public Forum (Oct 19)
Can information about civic events be included on neighborhood identification signs?	Additionally, revised draft provisions [see 3/6/2012 draft] would allow temporary signs in the public right-of-way as follows:	Public Forum (Oct 19)
Civic associations should be allowed to have signs that advertise their meetings	1) Directional commercial temporary signs on weekends for activities lawfully occurring in residential zoning districts	Citizen Focus Group
Please waive permits for temporary signs placed by community groups/churches for events benefitting Arlington neighborhoods - sandwich boards or other similarly sized signs in very residential areas. This is important to community organizations that have negligible budgets and staff. They cannot afford to allocate financial and volunteer resources to obtaining signage permits to advertise meetings.	2) Noncommercial signs either 31 days before an election, or a smaller sign daily allowed up to a maximum of 7 days at a time	Civic Association member

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<p>Civic associations have specific requirements from the county; they are not like other organizations; they are the interface between citizens and County and need recognition as such. At the same time, it is a slippery slope to allow signs posted by certain private entities and not others (even if they're non-profit or county 'sanctioned')</p>	<p>Response on previous page.</p>	<p>Public Forum (Oct 19)</p>
<p>Arlington County strongly supports/encourages active civic associations, which rely on involved members for successful events. Associations need effective communication for upcoming events. Meetings are on weekdays, Saturdays, or Friday evenings. We would like to have signs in place 3-5 days before an event. Our signs are 2' X 2' plastic. As proposed, Type 1 signs have a real estate focus and wouldn't be adequate for civic associations; Type 2 signs are allowed 31 days before an election. Could Type 2 signs be revised to 2 categories: a) elections and b) other signage with more restrictive time limits, e.g. 7 days before and 2 days after an event.</p> <p>Possible language to recognize the importance of allowing signs for civic associations:                      "Temporary signs can be placed by civic associations which are recognized by the County or are members of the Arlington County Civic Federation to announce their activities and events if they meet the following criteria:                      a) Signs announcing recurring meetings shall not exceed a height of 3 feet or a maximum area of 6 square feet. Such signs shall not be placed prior to 4 days before a meeting and shall be removed within one day after the meeting.                      b) Signs announcing special events, which occur no more frequently than semi-annually, shall not exceed a height of 4 feet or a maximum area of 12 square feet. Such signs shall not be placed prior to 10 days before an event and shall be removed within one day after the event."</p>		<p>Civic Association member</p>
<p><b>34.9 Signs in public right-of-way (enforcement)</b></p>		
<p>Citizens should be able to remove illegal signs</p>	<p>Staff is not recommending citizen enforcement at this time.</p>	<p>Citizen Forum (Oct 27)</p>
<p>The ordinance should define who can take down illegal signs in the ROW, and should allow the public to remove signs</p>		<p>Public Forum (Oct 19)</p>

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Concerns that enforcement is not currently done well. If the revised regulations are adopted, will enforcement improve? What happens during non-business hours? On weekends?	Zoning inspectors currently spend one day per week focusing on enforcement of signs within their assigned geographic areas. All areas of the County are covered by zoning inspector assignments. This practice is anticipated to continue and currently includes a short term focus on sidewalk signs, which were recently adopted	Public Forum (Oct 19)
I recommend that the County do more to enforce existing rules; there are too many signs in Arlington. Prohibit Real Estate signs to be placed no more than a block away from property.		Citizen
\$5000 in fines is cheap advertising for a business. Are the timeframes for enforcement in the ordinance? Can the county accelerate the timeframe for enforcement?	The time frames and fine amounts for enforcement come from VA Code. Repeated violations may lead to criminal sanctions.	Public Forum (Oct 19)
<b>34.11 Flashing, moving and changeable copy signs</b>		
Would a sign changing color be subject to the once per minute restriction?	It would depend on the size of the sign. Frequency of changes in copy/message of an automatic changeable copy sign is related to the size of the sign	Chamber of Commerce
Why not permit more frequently changing copy to accommodate signs such as the WJLA jumbotron, which is important for media organizations. Perhaps permit where there is a determination that traffic is not impacted. Some indicated that a large number of such signs would be distracting	This is a new sign type for the County. Staff does not recommend permitting scrolling signs and frequently changing copy/video at this time. Should that issue be reviewed again in the future, the ordinance could be amended.	BIDs/ Partnerships
WJLA sign is unique. If it will ever be replaced, structure of revised ordinance could be problematic. Theatre marquees like to scroll	Staff continues to review draft provisions for signs already approved under a comprehensive sign plan (that would apply to the WJLA jumbotron as well as other signs approved under comprehensive sign plans)	Sign Industry
Displays on gas pumps have some scrolling advertisements		Sign Industry; September Public Forum; Citizen Focus Group
Electronic signs for gas stations are frequently replacing signs that have to be changed manually, and should be allowed and do not seem like they should be regulated the same way as changing copy signs such as scrolling copy that change on a frequent and/or constant basis. (initial outreach)	Automatic changeable copy signs would be limited to selected sign types and subject to the same size and frequency of copy regulations as other automatic changeable copy signs	Citizen
Daytime brightness is not generally an issue, but a limit is good	Staff concurs. A daytime and nighttime limit are both incorporated	Sign Industry
What about poster-style (tri-vision) signs. Would these be permitted?	Staff is researching this issue	Sign Industry
Changeable copy for specific types of Business	The proposed ordinance limits changeable copy signs to specific zoning districts and specific sign types rather than to specific types of businesses	September Public Forum
Brightness and neighborhood compatibility should be taken into consideration	In this draft, there are no restrictions based on proximity to neighborhoods, however, sizes of signs with automatic changeable copy and frequency of change in copy are regulated. Staff continues to research specific lighting standards.	September Public Forum

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Pros and cons. Good: informative; bad : safety issue, distracting	Sec. 34.11 has lighting standards; and standards for frequency of changes in order to mitigate potential safety issues	September Public Forum
Standard should not be defined by one technology (LED) because technology changes quickly	Where specific technology is referenced, it is used as an example, not a requirement	September Public Forum
<b>34.12 sign permits</b>		
What is the relationship between the sign permitting process and the encroachment ordinance?	Staff is working to coordinate sign regulations with a future encroachment or permits ordinance, however, full coordination of the two issues would not occur until an encroachment or permits ordinance is developed and adopted.	Brokers/ Property Managers participant
The current sign approval process is lengthy and getting approval for temporary signs for more than one event in a particular location is frustrating (i.e. multiple window signs). Temporary signs can be useful while permanent signs are being manufactured; not being able to apply for signs until a Certificate of Occupancy is issued is also frustrating.	In the proposed draft, temporary window signs would not require permits.  Under current process, an application for a sign permit may be submitted after the application for a Certificate of Occupancy is submitted. The Certificate of Occupancy does not have to be issued before a sign application may be submitted.	Sign industry participant
<b>34.13 comprehensive sign plans</b>		
Why maintain the requirement? What's the point of a comprehensive sign plan if there are no opportunities for modifications? Could it be optional?	This subsection has been modified and no longer requires comprehensive sign plans. Under the current draft, they would be optional; With a comprehensive sign plan, some additional sign types would be available and there would be additional flexibility in placement of some sign types.	Chamber of Commerce
It may be easier to not have a comprehensive sign plan because it may restrict flexibility because tenants are unknown.		Chamber of Commerce
What does a comprehensive sign plan include? What signs are required?	This subsection has been modified to reflect the following proposed requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Location of signs</li> <li>▪ Sign materials and illumination</li> <li>▪ Sign size</li> </ul> All signs that require permits and that count toward total permitted sign area (aggregate sign area) would be included in the comprehensive sign plan.	Chamber of Commerce
How does the comprehensive sign plan process accommodate signs that need to be relocated or changed as the space is built out and tenants change?	Changes to comprehensive sign plans could be approved administratively.	Chamber of Commerce
Flexibility is very important, especially for leasing purposes, because frequently signage is a key issue for tenants		Brokers/ Property Managers
When does a comprehensive sign plan have to be submitted? At time of site plan approval is too early in the process because it is difficult to anticipate future tenants' needs.	The draft regulations do not identify a time frame, other than indicating that where a comprehensive sign plan exists, permits will only be issued for signs shown on the plan	Chamber of Commerce

Sign Regulations Update: Comments/responses on proposed sign regulations (updated 03/1/2012)

Comment	Response	Participant
What happens to existing comprehensive sign plans when the new ordinance is adopted? What happens to the conditions of an existing comprehensive sign plan?	The nonconforming sign subsection (34.16) has been modified to incorporate regulations for existing comprehensive sign plans as follows:	Brokers/ Property Managers
What happens if a new tenant needs a sign type or lighting type that is not in the existing comprehensive sign plan? Would an amendment be required?	An application may be submitted for an administrative change to convert to a comprehensive sign plan that conforms to all revised regulations in the ordinance. Otherwise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All signs on the property must conform with the existing plan</li> <li>▪ The Zoning Administrator would be able to approve replacement of existing CSP signs with signs of not greater number or size that fully comply with the revised ordinance</li> </ul>	Brokers/ Property Managers
How would condominium (business) buildings with different owners be affected?	This subsection has been revised to make comprehensive sign plans optional. If there is a comprehensive sign plan for the property, see above.	Brokers/ Property Managers
Comprehensive sign plans are helpful, and incentives provided in the draft, such as directory signs, are helpful to attract tenants. Allowing signs within a comprehensive sign plan to be allocated at the discretion of the landlord is useful.	n/a	Sign Industry participant
Private landlords also play a role in limiting signs, as they have higher control over tenants than does the County; Landlords can prevent signs clustered around a public entrance		Public Forum (Oct 19)
Signs should not be included with site plans. There is concern with the proposed ordinance that signs would “fly under the radar”	In the past, the County has required that a comprehensive sign plan be submitted with a site plan. The proposed draft would make all comprehensive sign plans administrative, and thus not coupled with site plan approval.	Public Forum (Oct 19)
<b>34.14 Temporary signs for construction and sale/leasing</b>		
34.14 Temporary signs for construction and sale/leasing (Temporary Construction Signs)		
<p>If I have a site under construction and has say 500 linear ft of frontage / fencing along public street, can I line the entire fence with images? Like 800 or 900 North Glebe.</p> <p>Section 34.14 says that only one sign face is allowed? Does that mean the rest of the construction fencing is supposed to be blank? Please tell me that is not the intent. In addition, 120 SF of text is very limiting. Additional sign area has been approved and has been well received [9/14/2011 Draft]</p>	<p>The intent of the ordinance is to allow signs on construction fencing to include images that are not counted as sign area. In the latest draft of the proposal, text and numbers would be allowed the larger of 120 sf per street frontage or 20% of the area of the fencing on each street frontage.</p> <p>The intent is not to require blank faces on construction fencing, but rather to allow the applicant the flexibility to allocate the permitted sign on each street frontage. (continued on next page)</p>	Brokers/ Property Managers

Sign Regulations Update: Comments/responses on proposed sign regulations (updated 03/1/2012)

Comment	Response	Participant
<p>What if there is more than one building? 120 SF isn't enough for two or more buildings. Could you calculate permitted area based on linear frontage? [9/14/2011 Draft]</p>	<p>The methodology for counting sign area for signs on construction fencing is proposed to be changed, as articulated above, while traditional freestanding signs for the same purpose would continue to be limited to 120 sf per main building on a lot</p>	<p>BIDs/ Partnerships; Public Forum participant (October 2011)</p>
<p>Construction signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include allowance for names, logos, leasing information</li> <li>• Allow only name/contact info of developer/builder – no other advertising</li> <li>• 120 sf is not enough for a project occupying an entire block</li> <li>• Area permitted should relate to linear frontage</li> </ul>		<p>Public Forum participants (April 2011)</p>
<p>I know that area stakeholders will be pleased to see the increased flexibility provided with temporary and construction signage. The construction fence signage and the full coverage of retail windows will help convey excitement of coming projects while screening construction sites and avoiding ugly brown paper windows [11/15/11 ZOCO review draft]</p>		<p>BIDs/ Partnerships</p>
<p>Regarding construction fencing--that fencing must observe the vision obstruction setback at corners/intersections. If you look at the picture on page 40 of the draft the construction sign is right up to the stop sign at the corner. A car/bike/ped has to pull out into the intersection to see beyond it.</p>	<p>Sign regulations would not regulate height or placement of fencing. Vision clearance at corners, as well as fence location and height are regulated by other sections of the Zoning Ordinance (32.D.4 and 32.D.3.e, respectively).</p> <p>Staff will review all pictures in the proposed amendment to ensure that they are consistent with proposed regulations.</p>	<p>Citizen</p>
<p>34.14 Temporary signs for construction and sale/leasing (Temporary sale and leasing signs)</p>		
<p>Vacant retail/office spaces should have similar provisions to construction sites in order to screen interior construction and advertise what is coming next to the space.</p>	<p>Staff concurs. The latest draft includes provisions that would vacant ground floor windows to be covered and only the text and numbers would count toward permitted sign area</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p>Temporary signs should be easier, especially when only used for special events or to find creative ways to temporarily use empty retail/office space</p>		<p>Public Forum participants (April 2011)</p>
<p>Retail spaces may be vacant for more than 6 months, and would need signage for the entire time</p>	<p>Staff proposes to remove the six month restriction for signs covering windows of vacant retail spaces. Such signs would be permitted when an applicant demonstrates that retail space is or will become vacant.</p>	<p>BIDs/ Partnerships; Brokers/ Property Managers</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary signs for pre-leasing signs – area permitted should relate to the size of the building</li> <li>• 30 days or 6 mos. is not enough; 2-3 years is realistic; Consider use of an industry standard for how long it takes to lease a space</li> </ul>		<p>Public Forum (April 2011)</p>

Sign Regulations Update: Comments/responses on proposed sign regulations (updated 03/1/2012)

Comment	Response	Participant
Allow leasing signs above 35 feet	Staff proposes to remove the restriction on height of temporary leasing signs	Public Forum (April 2011)
Small businesses could benefit from temporary signs while requested signs are being reviewed	The proposed amendment would permit temporary signs to cover up any approved permanent signs so long as any temporary banner is affixed at all corners	Public Forum (April 2011)
I wanted to reiterate the importance of keeping the ability for property owners to install rooftop temporary signage on their buildings during high or anticipated vacancies and during building renovations. We've had a few conversations with property owner representatives and they see these banners as key to the releasing of vacated spaces, especially in light of BRAC relocations. The current language does a good job of outlining this ability, but based on the conversation at the [11/15/2011] ZOCO meeting, it seemed important to ensure that this is a key tool in helping to release buildings.		BIDs/ Partnerships
<b>34.15 General Provisions</b>		
No comments received		
<b>34.16 Nonconforming Signs</b>		
What are the impacts of the proposed changes on historic sign maintenance and replacements	For any sign for which a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) is required, the HALRB could approve a sign that does not fully meet the provisions of the sign regulations in the Zoning Ordinance so long as all other guidelines for approval of a CoA are followed. Provisions are included in the draft in 34.16 and 34.18 (these provisions would ultimately be codified as part of Section 31A Historic Districts).	Chamber of Commerce
Are historic districts and historic signs included?		Chamber of Commerce
Provisions preclude maintenance of a nonconforming sign; subsection A conflicts with subsection C	This subsection has been significantly edited to remove conflicts. There would be limits to changes to nonconforming signs. The subsection has, however, been edited to ensure that signs approved through comprehensive sign plans prior to adoption of a revised ordinance would not be treated as nonconforming signs, and could be repaired, maintained or replaced with another sign of the same size meeting provisions of the revised ordinance.	Public participant at ZOCO mtg

Sign Regulations Update: Comments/responses on proposed sign regulations (updated 03/1/2012)

Comment	Response	Participant
<b>34.17 Definitions and Interpretation</b>		
<p>I reviewed the DRAFT looking for definitions of Public Right-of-Way and Public Property as requested by the Civic Federation. I did not see these. In a meeting several months ago, we discussed the use of various terminology with staff, and what it meant regarding what could be posted on bulletin boards in publicly-owned or leased buildings and County parks. I raised several examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Signs on school property.</li> <li>(2) Public Buildings.</li> </ul>	<p>“Public right-of-way” is used throughout the Zoning Ordinance, and therefore would need to be reviewed in a broader context than the sign regulations. In the proposed draft, (private) signs placed in the public right-of-way are restricted to commercial and noncommercial temporary signs (see subsection 34.9.C) which are specifically prohibited on school sites and other public lands other than those identified in the draft. Signs at schools would either be regulated under proposed subsection 34.8 Institutional signs, or under regulations for the zoning district in which the use is located.</p>	<p>Civic Federation member</p>
<p>How does the ordinance take company name length into consideration when calculating sign areas?</p>	<p>The provisions in the ordinance are intended to be content neutral and therefore do not provide size options based on length of company name. However, the concept of “aggregated sign area” provides flexibility to the applicant in how permitted area is divided among permitted sign types.</p>	<p>unknown</p>
<b>34.18 Miscellaneous Provisions</b>		
<p>Why does the County Board still have authority over lighting of rooflines.</p>	<p>Architectural lighting meeting defined standards would not be regulated as a sign. However, in order to regulate such lighting, staff proposes to maintain County Board authority in this area.</p>	<p>Public participant at ZOCO mtg</p>