

**PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 13. SIGNS.**

**DRAFT – 06/11/2025**

In this draft: RED=reorg/reformat/clarify only; blue=policy change; Green=moved with or without edits

## **Article 13. Signs**

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### **§13.7. Signs in C and M Districts (excluding One- and Two-Family and Townhouse Uses)**

#### **§13.7.1. General**

##### **A. Signs allowed**

The sign types listed and described in this §13.7 are allowed on private property in commercial/mixed-use (C) and industrial (M) districts, except for one- and two-family and townhouse uses, subject to the permit requirements, standards and conditions set forth for each sign type.

##### **B. Lighting**

Signs allowed under §13.7 shall not be separately lighted unless the standard in the table says “yes” or “see standards” next to the “separately lighted?” query. The fact that a sign may be partly or wholly illuminated by a porch light or other light serving another purpose shall not be considered “separately lighted.”

##### **C. Changeable copy**

Signs allowed under this §13.7 shall not include automatic changeable copy elements unless the standard in the table says “yes” next to the “automatic changeable copy?” query. See §13.13 for standards that apply to all automatic changeable copy signs under this Article 13.

##### **D. Aggregate sign area allowed**

###### **1. Aggregate sign area for buildings without a comprehensive sign plan**

For buildings without a comprehensive sign plan, the aggregate sign area allowed for each tenant is the larger of 60 sq. ft. or one sq. ft. of sign area per linear foot of building frontage, plus:

- (a)** For buildings with more than one entrance, one additional sign not exceeding 6 sq. ft. for each secondary entrance; and
- (b)** For commercial buildings located on corner lots or lots abutting streets at both the front and rear, or for commercial buildings served by an abutting parking lot of no less than 60 feet in width located to the side or rear of the main building, one additional sign not exceeding 30 sq. ft. on the side or rear wall of the building that abuts the public street or parking lot associated with the building.

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34                   **2. Aggregate sign area for buildings with a comprehensive sign plan**

35                   ~~For a~~ **Aggregate sign area for a** single building or combination of buildings with a  
36                   comprehensive sign plan **shall be as provided in §13.15.2.D.** ~~the aggregate sign~~  
37                   ~~area allowed is the sum of:~~

38                   (a) ~~One sq. ft. of sign area per linear foot of building frontage; plus~~

39                   (b) ~~For buildings in any C district except C-1-R, C-1, C-1-O, C-2 and C-O-1.0, one~~  
40                   ~~additional sq. ft. of sign area for each linear foot of façade (the length of a~~  
41                   ~~straight line measured from one end of the building wall of the façade to the~~  
42                   ~~other end of the same wall, where neither articulations nor off-sets in the wall~~  
43                   ~~shall increase the length of the façade); counting only those portions of the~~  
44                   ~~building façade approved for retail use and that have at least one exterior public~~  
45                   ~~entrance per tenant, for each of the following (when not already counted in~~  
46                   ~~§13.7.1.D.2(a) above):~~

47                   ~~(1) Any façade fronting a Pedestrian Priority Street or Shared Street as defined~~  
48                   ~~in the Arlington County Master Transportation Plan;~~

49                   ~~(2) Any façade fronting an area meeting all of the following criteria:~~

50                   ~~(i) Provides an unenclosed park or plaza open to the public shown on an~~  
51                   ~~adopted sector, small area or revitalization plan; or provides an~~  
52                   ~~unenclosed park or plaza open to the public located as required by an~~  
53                   ~~approved site plan condition(s); and~~

54                   ~~(ii) Has at least a portion at grade with the adjacent sidewalk; and~~

55                   ~~(iii) Is contiguous with the public right-of-way; and~~

56                   ~~(iv) Is not separated from the building façade by an off-street parking area;~~

57                   (c) ~~Any portion of building façade counted in §13.7.1.D.2(a), (b)(1) or (b)(2) above,~~  
58                   ~~that contains two stories approved for retail use that are each at least ten feet~~  
59                   ~~above finished grade and have at least one exterior public entrance per tenant;~~  
60                   ~~plus~~

61                   (d) ~~For a building with one or more establishments with at least one exterior public~~  
62                   ~~entrance and less than 60 feet of cumulative frontage and façade counted in~~  
63                   ~~§13.7.1.D.2(a), (b) and (c) above, 60 sq. ft. for each such establishment minus~~  
64                   ~~the length of any frontage already counted in §13.7.1.D.2(a), (b) and (c) above.~~

65                   **E. Additional sign area for specified uses public parking garages**

66                   1. In public parking garages equipped with technology that identifies available parking  
67                   spaces within the garage in real time, in addition to other signs on a development  
68                   project, the county manager may place, or cause to be placed, additional wall or  
69                   freestanding automatic changeable copy signs at the garage entry to a public parking  
70                   facility. Such signs shall:

71                   (a) Be limited to noncommercial messages and shall be no larger than 60 sq. ft.;

72                   (b) Be allowed in addition to otherwise allowed aggregate sign area;

73                   (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of §13.13.2, be allowed to include up to 12 sq. ft. of  
74                   automatic changeable copy elements for each sign; and

75                   (d) Be of such design as the county manager may determine.

2. ~~Any building that meets the following criteria may install up to a maximum of two additional wall or blade signs above a height of 40 feet, with a permit, subject to the standards listed below. Such signs shall be allowed in addition to otherwise allocated aggregate sign area, but shall be separate from, and not combined with signs included in aggregate sign area, and under no circumstances shall more than two signs per building be placed above a height of 40 feet.~~

(a) ~~The building is not located in an S-3A, S-D, R, RA, C-1, C-2, C-1-O, C-O-1.0 or C-1-R district;~~

(b) ~~The building is more than 70 feet in height;~~

(c) ~~The building, above the ground floor, is devoted primarily to office, commercial, public or at least 50 percent to hotel uses; and~~

(d) ~~The maximum area of each additional sign is limited as follows:~~

<u>Height of Building</u>	<u>Maximum Sign Area (sq. ft.)</u>
<u>70 ft. – 100 ft.</u>	<u>0.6 x building width at height of sign</u>
<u>101 ft. – 200 ft.</u>	<u>1.0 x building width at height of sign</u>
<u>&gt;201 ft.</u>	<u>1.5 x building width at height of sign</u>

#### F. Placement standards for signs below a height of 40 feet

1. No signs shall be permitted on that part of the side or rear wall of a building within 100 feet of any R or RA district except, where a tenant's primary entrance is located on a side or rear wall of a building, the tenant's sign that otherwise would be allowed on the front wall of the building may be erected on the wall where the primary entrance is located.
2. No sign shall extend above the height of the roofline of the building, measured from the actual roofline in the case of a flat roof or from the eaves line in the case of a hip or gable roof; except, on a building that is 24 feet or less in height, up to 20 percent of the sign area may extend up to 1.5 feet above the roofline.

#### G. ~~Placement standards~~ Additional sign area for signs above a height of 40 feet for buildings with specified uses

~~Any building that meets the following criteria may install up to a maximum of two additional wall or blade signs located above a height of 40 feet, with a permit, subject to the standards listed below. Such signs shall be allowed, with a permit, in addition to otherwise allocated aggregate sign area, but shall be separate from, and not combined with signs included in aggregate sign area, and under no circumstances shall more than two signs per building be placed above a height of 40 feet. subject to all of the following provisions, set forth in~~ order to protect the viewshed for properties in residential districts that face commercial areas of the County, the following provisions are set forth in order and to limit visibility of signs placed above a height of 40 feet from areas planned primarily for residential development:-

##### 1. Number of signs

Under no circumstances shall more than two signs per building be placed above a height of 40 feet, and under no circumstances shall more than one sign be placed

above a height of 40 feet on any building façade directly facing Line B on Map 13-1, except as provided in this 13.7.1.G.1(a) below:

- (a) A building with multiple distinct towers for all floors above the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, may apply the standards in 13.7.1.G.1 above, to each tower, for up to a maximum of two towers per building.

## 2. Zoning districts and uses

- (a) No sign shall be placed above a height of 40 feet in a S-3A, S-D, R, RA, C-1, C-2, C-1-O, C-O-1.0 or C-1-R districts; and
- (b) ~~The~~ At least 50 percent of the GFA of the building, above the ground floor, shall be approved for devoted primarily to office, commercial, public and/or at least 50 percent to hotel uses; and
- (c) ~~Under no circumstances shall a sign be placed above a height of 40 feet be placed on a building that is less than 70 feet in height.~~

## 3. Sign Area

The maximum area of each additional sign is determined by multiplying the linear foot of building frontage for the façade on which the sign is placed, by the multiplier provided in 13.7.1.G.3(a) below. For facades that do not face a public street or street with a public access easement, the length of the façade on which the sign is placed may substitute for linear foot of building frontage and shall be measured in the same manner.

### (a) Sign area multiplier

Height of building	Multiplier
<del>Less than 70 ft.</del>	<del>No multiplier. Each sign shall not exceed 75 sq. ft. No signs allowed above a height of 40 feet</del>
70 ft. – 100 ft.	0.6 × length of the façade on which the sign is placed
<del>401</del> >100 ft. – 200 ft.	1.0 × length of the façade on which the sign is placed
> <del>201</del> 200 ft.	1.5 × length of the façade on which the sign is placed

- (b) For buildings with multiple towers, the length of linear foot of building frontage shall be measured where the base of the tower on which the sign is placed, meets the base of the building.

- ~~a. Under no circumstances shall more than two signs per building be placed above a height of 40 feet, and under no circumstances shall more than one sign be placed above a height of 40 feet on any building façade directly facing Line B on Map 13-1.~~
- ~~b. No sign shall be placed above a height of 40 feet in a C-1, C-2, C-1-O, C-O-1.0 or C-1-R district.~~

145 4. **Placement and lighting**

146 ~~(a) Horizontally oriented signs shall fit within a sign band that~~  
147 ~~is no more than six feet in height, provided, however, that~~  
148 ~~up to 20 percent of the sign may be no more than nine~~  
149 ~~feet in height. The designated sign band shall be placed~~  
150 ~~within the 20 feet of the building façade below the main~~  
151 ~~roofline or other roofline of the building below the main~~  
152 ~~roofline for a building where there are multiple rooflines.~~

153 (b) No sign shall extend above the height of the roofline of  
154 the building, measured from the actual roofline in the  
155 case of a flat roof or from the eaves line in the case of a hip or gable roof.

156 (c) No sign placed above a height of 40 feet shall have any automatic changeable  
157 copy element.

158 (d) All signs placed above a height of 40 feet may be illuminated only by internal  
159 lighting and hours of illumination shall be as set forth in §13.12.3.



160 5. **Direction and Map 13-1**

161 (a) **Line A**

162 Signs placed above a height of 40 feet may be placed on building facades  
163 perpendicular to or facing away from the line identified as Line A on Map 13-1,  
164 but shall not be placed on facades facing Line A (a façade shall be considered to  
165 be facing Line A if it is less than 90 degrees from parallel). Provided, however,  
166 that such signs may be placed on building facades abutting streets parallel to  
167 Line A, including but not limited to, Wilson Blvd., Clarendon Blvd., Fairfax Dr., S.  
168 Randolph St., S. Quincy St. and Campbell Ave, if the building façade is not within  
169 200 feet of an R or RA district, and the applicant demonstrates that view of the  
170 sign is substantially blocked from the aforementioned districts by a building or  
171 other obstruction of equal or greater height to the height of the sign. Placement  
172 of signs above a height of 40 feet may be allowed by the Zoning Administrator as  
173 set forth in this paragraph **5(a)**, or **the standards in this paragraph 5(a)** may be  
174 modified by the County Board, only as set forth in §13.3.1.A.2(d).

175 (b) **Line B**

176 Under no circumstances shall more than one sign be placed above a height of 40  
177 feet on any building façade directly facing Line B on Map 13-1, except as  
178 provided in 13.7.1.G.1(a) for buildings with multiple towers.

## SIGNS ALLOWED IN C AND M DISTRICTS

### §13.7.2. Arcade signs

#### A. Defined

A sign that is suspended underneath an awning, canopy, marquee, overhang, or other structural element of a building that forms a covered passageway for pedestrians.

#### B. General standards

Maximum number	1 per public entrance under canopy <u>or awning</u>
Maximum size	<del>4.5</del> 20 sq. ft.
Maximum projection	The lesser of 42 inches or depth of awning or canopy
Minimum <u>vertical</u> clearance <del>above sidewalk</del>	8 ft. <u>above finished grade if sign area &lt;= 1.5 sq. ft.</u> <u>10 ft. above finished grade if sign area &gt; 1.5 sq. ft.</u>
Permit required?	Yes
Separate lighting?	Yes
Commercial messages?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Included in aggregate sign area?	Yes

#### C. Other standards

~~Allowed only where multiple establishments share a common canopy ceiling over a sidewalk.~~

- An arcade sign may require a separate encroachment agreement or permit from the County, subject to established standards.



### §13.7.3. Awning or canopy signs

#### A. Defined

Awning signs: A sign that is painted on or affixed to the surface of an awning.

Canopy sign: A sign that is affixed to the flat vertical surface of or sits on top of a canopy.

#### B. General standards

Maximum number	1 per awning or canopy; for awnings or canopies longer than 8 linear feet, 1 per 8 ft. of linear awning or canopy
Maximum size	60 sq. ft. without a comprehensive sign plan; no limit other than aggregate sign area with a comprehensive sign plan
Permit required?	Yes
Separate lighting?	Yes
Commercial messages?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Included in aggregate sign area?	Yes





## SIGNS ALLOWED IN C AND M DISTRICTS

### C. Other standards

The purpose of this section is to provide regulations for signs on awnings or canopies; installation, design and dimensions of the awning or canopy are determined by applicable provisions of this zoning ordinance and/or from an approved site plan and/or other applicable County ordinance regulation or requirement.

#### §13.7.4. Blade signs

##### A. Defined

Any sign that is attached in a plane approximately perpendicular to the surface of a building or other structure.

##### B. General standards

Maximum size for any property without a comprehensive sign plan	20 sq. ft.	
Maximum size for any property with a comprehensive sign plan	20 sq. ft.	<70 feet of building frontage
	35 sq. ft.	>= 70 feet of building frontage
Maximum projection	42 inches	
Minimum vertical clearance	10 ft. above finished grade	
Permit required?	Yes	
Separate lighting?	Yes	
Automatic changeable copy?	Yes, subject to standards of §13.12	
Commercial messages?	Yes	
Included in aggregate sign area?	Yes	
Maximum height to top of sign	40 feet, <u>or below the second story above finished grade, whichever is higher;</u> except for a building with a comprehensive sign plan, up to two wall or blade signs per building may be placed above <u>the aforementioned</u> a height <u>of 40 feet</u> , subject to the standards in §13.7.1.G.	

##### C. Other standards

- c. A blade sign may require a separate encroachment agreement or permit from the County, subject to established standards.
- d. A blade sign may be applied to fabric or other flexible, durable material provided the sign is firmly affixed to prevent movement.

##### D. Relationship to wall signs

A sign that projects 18 inches or less from the wall is considered a wall sign; see §13.7.13.



#### §13.7.5. Flags

##### A. Defined

A piece of cloth or other material affixed to a pole on two corners.

##### B. General standards

Maximum number of poles	3
Maximum height of pole	35 ft.
Maximum flags per pole	2
Maximum flag size	60 sq. ft.
Maximum total flag area	180 sq. ft.
Permit required?	No
Separate lighting?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	No



## SIGNS ALLOWED IN C AND M DISTRICTS

Commercial messages?	No
Included in aggregate sign area?	No

### C. Other standards

Flagpoles shall be located as shown on an approved site plan; if there is no approved site plan for the property and no site plan is required, flagpoles shall be located within 30 feet of the principal entrance to the main building.

## §13.7.6. Freestanding signs

### A. Defined

A sign that is affixed to the ground, or to a wall that is not part of a building, or to a fence; freestanding signs include but are not necessarily limited to signs mounted on monument-style foundations, on poles, or on fences or other approved accessory structures.

### B. General Standards

Freestanding signs subject to the standards below are allowed for only the following uses:

1. Outdoor sales lot or other lot, the use of which involves no main building and consists primarily of the use of land;
2. Unified shopping center; and
3. Vehicle service establishment (replaces a wall sign).

Maximum size	60 sq. ft. per side; may be 2-sided
Maximum height	15 ft.
Number allowed	1 except as provided below
Permit required?	Yes
Minimum setback	10 ft. from back of sidewalk 5 ft. from other property lines
Separate lighting?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	Yes, subject to standards of §13.12
Commercial messages?	Yes
Included in aggregate sign area?	Yes





## SIGNS ALLOWED IN C AND M DISTRICTS

### Uses for which allowed

~~Freestanding signs are allowed for only the following uses:~~

- ~~1. Outdoor sales lot or other lot, the use of which involves no main building and consists primarily of the use of land;~~
- ~~e. Unified shopping center; and~~
- ~~f. Vehicle service establishment (replaces a wall sign).~~

### C. Other standards

1. For a unified shopping center, one additional freestanding identification sign may be approved if both freestanding signs are incorporated into screening or retaining walls or planter boxes or are mounted on a brick base with a maximum height of three feet and a maximum overall base and sign height of 15 feet, and the total sign area of both freestanding signs does not exceed 60 sq. ft.
2. For vehicle service establishments, a group of fuel pumps may have additional signs not exceeding an aggregate area of 12 sq. ft. for each pump island.
3. For uses listed in subsection ~~B~~ **C**, above, located on a corner lot or on a lot with frontage on two or more streets, one additional freestanding sign may be approved with the same dimensions as the first sign.
4. Where two or more freestanding signs are allowed on a site, the sign placed on the side street shall not be located within 200 feet of property zoned R or RA.
5. For a permitted drive-through window accessory to any use, one additional freestanding or wall mounted sign shall be permitted to be located within five feet of the drive-aisle for the drive-through window, up to a maximum of 12 sq. ft. in size, so long as no words, numerals, symbols or pictures on such device are legible from any property other than the property on which the drive-through window is located. If such sign or other device is larger than four sq. ft. or it is electrified, it shall require a permit.

### D. Freestanding signs for buildings governed under site plan or use permit:

1. For properties governed under an approved site plan or Form Based Code use permit, see also 13.7.13.C.2 (Wall signs).



### §13.7.7. Incidental signs

#### A. Defined

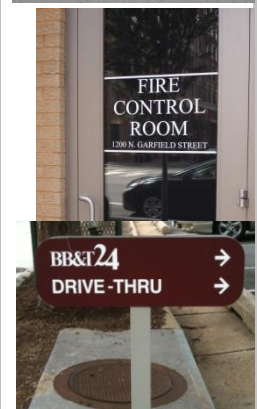
A small, noncommercial sign. Examples include, but are not limited to, signs that provide information or directions that are necessary for the physical use of the site, such as warnings, parking rules or way-finding information.

#### B. General standards

Maximum size (wall)	4 sq. ft.
Maximum size (freestanding)	3 sq. ft. per side, may be 2-sided
Maximum height (freestanding)	4 ft.
Number allowed	As needed
Permit required?	No
Separate lighting?	No
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Commercial messages?	Limited; see standards below
Included in aggregate sign area?	No

#### C. Other standards

1. One incidental sign per 1st or 2nd floor occupant may contain a commercial message.
2. Freestanding signs may be placed only on the perimeter of a parking lot and may be no less than 25 feet apart.
3. Wall or blade signs of a maximum of 6.5 sq. ft., with no dimension exceeding 4 sq. ft., that meet all other standards in subsection §13.7.7.B, above, and all standards prescribed in the diagram to the left may be installed on public parking facilities. Compliance with these standards shall be determined by the zoning administrator, based on factors that include but are not limited to location; color; size; shape and lettering, as shown in the diagram at left.



### §13.7.8. Signs for public, civic and institutional uses (optional)

See §13.9 for additional standards applicable to public, civic and institutional uses.



### §13.7.9. Signs for urban regional shopping centers

For alternative regulations applicable to urban regional shopping centers, see §13.8

### §13.7.10. Sidewalk signs

#### A. Defined

A temporary, self-supporting sign made of durable material and located on the sidewalk in front of a use for which such a sign is allowed.

#### B. General standards

Maximum size	7 sq. ft. per side (may be two-sided)
Maximum height	3.5 ft.
Number allowed	One per public entrance directly from sidewalk into establishment
Permit required?	No
Separate lighting?	No
Changeable copy?	No
Commercial messages?	Yes
Included in aggregate sign area?	No

#### C. Other standards

1. Temporary sidewalk signs shall be permitted only for establishments (but not for home occupations);
2. No more than one temporary sidewalk sign is permitted for each public entrance to an establishment. For purposes of this §13.7.10, a parking garage is an establishment and a public entrance includes a vehicular entrance;
3. If an establishment has more than one public entrance and two of the public entrances face the same street and are located within 200 feet or less of each other, then a sign shall be allowed for only one of the public entrances;
4. Such signs may be placed on the sidewalk only during hours the establishment is open;
5. Temporary sidewalk signs shall be permitted only on sidewalks where there is an existing minimum six-foot clear walkway (an unobstructed areas serving as circulation space for pedestrians). In order to provide adequate clearance for pedestrians and persons with visual and mobility disabilities, such signs shall not be placed within any required clear walkway for the site, and shall be located either entirely within two feet of the building face, or within the landscape and utility zone such that there is at least one foot between the sign and the edge of the curb (on sidewalks where there is no landscaping, sidewalk signs may be placed within four feet of the edge of the curb if such placement maintains the clear walkway required in this subparagraph and maintains at least one foot between the sign and the edge of the curb);
6. Temporary sidewalk signs shall not be placed in tree pits that are not covered with hard grates;
7. Such signs shall be self-supporting, either with legs or supports that are continuous with the plane of the sign face; or with a solid base no wider than the sign width, protruding no more than 12 inches from the plane of the sign face, and separated by no more than six inches from the bottom of the sign face; and
8. Any sign found by the zoning administrator to be unsafe or to present a hazard or to impair a required clear walkway, shall be removed immediately.



### §13.7.11. Temporary signs

For temporary signs allowed in these districts, see window signs (§13.7.14) and temporary signs for construction and sale/leasing (§13.16).

### §13.7.12. Umbrella signs

#### A. Defined

A sign painted on or affixed to the surface of an umbrella.

#### B. General standards

Maximum size	Up to 4 sq. ft. on any individual umbrella
Permit required?	No
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Commercial messages?	Yes
Included in aggregate sign area?	No



### §13.7.13. Wall signs

#### A. Defined

Any sign that is affixed directly to or suspended from a building wall, marquee, mansard wall, or parapet wall of a building, with the exposed face of the sign in a plane approximately parallel to and projecting no more than 18 inches from the face of the wall. A wall sign may be either of one-piece construction or of individual connected or related letters or symbols.

#### B. General standards

Maximum size	For a building or property for which there is an approved comprehensive sign plan, the only dimensional limitation or limitation on total number of signs per occupant is the maximum aggregate sign area (see §13.19.1.A), as allocated under the approved comprehensive sign plan.  For properties for which there is not an approved comprehensive sign plan, the maximum size per sign is 60 sq. ft.
Permit required?	Yes
Separate lighting?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	Yes, subject to standards of §13.13
Commercial messages?	Yes
Included in aggregate sign area?	Yes
Maximum height to top of sign	40 feet <u>or below the second story above finished grade, whichever is higher</u> , except for a building with a comprehensive sign plan, up to <u>a combined total of two</u> wall or blade signs per building may be placed above <u>the aforementioned</u> a-height <u>of 40 feet</u> , subject to the standards in §13.7.1.G.



### C. Other standards

1. Up to 50 sq. ft. of wall signs placed inside of a public parking garage, two feet or more from and mounted approximately perpendicular to the façade on which the vehicular entrance to the garage is located shall not be counted as part of aggregate sign area.
2. For buildings governed by a site plan approved in accordance with §15.5 or a Form Based Code use permit approved in accordance with §15.4, freestanding signs placed on approved retaining, screening, structural or landscape planter walls that are not otherwise part of the building, are allowed subject to the following:
  - (a) The retaining, screening, structural or landscape planter wall on which the sign is placed must be shown on an approved site plan or landscape plan associated with the subject property; and
  - (b) Such signs shall be subject to all standards for wall signs on the same property, as provided in 13.7.13.B, except such signs shall not have automatic changeable copy; and
  - (c) The sign placement shall not exceed the height of the structure on which the sign is placed.
  - (d) Such signs shall only be approved through issuance of a sign permit.



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### §13.7.14. Window signs

#### A. Defined

Any permanent or temporary sign, including any decal, that is legible from the outside, including plazas, public streets, and parking lots, and that is placed on the outside or inside face of a window or mounted within two feet of the inside face of the window.

#### B. General standards

Maximum total area per sign	80 sq. ft. or 20 percent of window area, whichever is less, for all buildings except in windows of individual residential dwelling units (see C.2 below)
Number allowed	Unlimited
Permit required?	No
Separate lighting?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Commercial messages?	Yes; except commercial messages are not allowed in windows of individual residential dwelling units (see C.2 below).
Included in aggregate sign area?	No

#### C. Other standards

1. Window signs shall be allowed only for establishments located on the first or second floor of a building up to a maximum height of 40 feet.
2. An unlimited number of temporary window signs with noncommercial messages only, up to 6.5 sq. ft. per sign is permitted in the windows, only of individual residential dwelling units.



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## §13.8. Signs for urban regional shopping centers

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### SIGNS ALLOWED FOR URBAN REGIONAL SHOPPING CENTERS

#### §13.8.4. Arcade signs

##### A. Defined

A sign that is suspended underneath an awning, canopy, marquee, overhang, or other structural element of a building that forms a covered passageway for pedestrians.

##### B. General standards

Maximum size and number	As limited by the maximum aggregate sign area as allocated under an approved comprehensive sign plan
Minimum clearance above sidewalk	8 ft. <a href="#">above finished grade if sign area &lt;= 1.5 sq. ft.</a> 10 ft. <a href="#">above finished grade if sign area &gt; 1.5 sq. ft.</a>
<a href="#">Maximum projection</a>	<a href="#">The lesser of 42 inches or depth of awning or canopy</a>
Permit required?	Yes
Separate lighting?	Yes
Commercial messages?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Included in aggregate sign area?	Yes

##### C. Other standards

1. Allowed only where multiple establishments share a common canopy ceiling over a sidewalk.
2. [An arcade sign may require a separate encroachment agreement or permit from the County, subject to established standards.](#)



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## §13.9. Signs for Public, Civic and Institutional Buildings

### §13.9.1. General

Any public, civic and institutional building in any district may have the following signs:

#### A. Choice of standards

A public, civic or institutional building may choose to have its signs regulated either under the sign regulations applicable to other uses in the same district as the public, civic and institutional building, or under the sign regulations in this §13.9. A public, civic or institutional building that intends to exercise either option must declare its intent on its comprehensive sign plan (if any) or by separate letter submitted on its first application for a sign permit. No public, civic and institutional building may “mix and match” signs allowed for public, civic and institutional buildings and signs allowed for other uses in the same district.



**B. Miscellaneous signs**

Regardless of which election a public, civic and institutional building makes pursuant to §13.9.1.A, the public, civic and institutional building is allowed the following additional signs subject to all standards allowed for such signs in the same district:

- 1. Flags; and
- 2. Incidental signs.

**SIGNS FOR PUBLIC, CIVIC AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS**

**§13.9.2. Banners**

**A. Defined**

A sign applied to cloth or fabric or other flexible, durable material. Flags as defined herein shall not be considered banners.

**B. General standards**

Maximum number	1 per main building; or in the case of public parks without a main building, 1 per main entrance
Maximum size	40 sq. ft.
Permit required?	Yes
Separate lighting?	No
Commercial messages?	No
Automatic changeable copy?	No

**C. Other standards**

- 1. Banners shall be firmly affixed at all four corners to prevent movement.
- 2. Banners allowed under this §13.9.2 shall be temporary and shall be permitted up to fourteen days before and two days after an event, or a maximum of sixteen days.



### §13.9.3. Awning, Canopy, Freestanding and wall signs

#### **Defined**

A sign that is affixed to the ground, or to a wall or to a fence (to the extent allowed by this Article 13) and not to a building; freestanding signs include but are not necessarily limited to signs mounted on monument-style foundations, on poles, or on fences or other approved accessory structures.

#### **A. General standards**

Maximum total sign area	30 sq. ft., except as provided in <u>CB.4</u> below
Maximum height	5 ft. <u>for freestanding signs</u> 40 ft. <u>for all other signs</u>
Number allowed	<u>2 3</u> per main building
Minimum setback <u>for freestanding signs</u>	5 feet from back of sidewalk
Permit required?	Yes
Separate lighting?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	Yes
Commercial messages?	<u>No-Yes</u>

#### **B. Other standards**

- Freestanding signs shall not be located any closer than ten feet from the edge of the street or thoroughfare to which said sign is directed, nor within the visual clearance area defined by §3.2.6.A.4.
- Freestanding signs shall be allowed only for public, civic and institutional uses in P, R or RA districts or stand-alone buildings in C or M districts, not for public, civic and institutional uses in mixed-use buildings.
- Notwithstanding the standards in 13.9.3.A above, one noncommercial wall sign per public entrance per building, up to a maximum of 4 sq. ft., is allowed without a permit. Freestanding signs for any public, civic and institutional use may alternatively be installed as wall, canopy or awning signs with the same total sign area and dimensions.
- Additional signs for schools:
  - Additional signs not legible from any public street right-of-way are permitted without permits for schools. All such signs shall contain only noncommercial messages.
  - In schools, one sign with no commercial messages, for each athletic field, up to a maximum of 150 sq. ft. Notwithstanding the provisions of §13.13, such signs shall be allowed automatic changeable copy elements of up to 25 percent of the sign. A sign as permitted by this subsection (b) shall not be considered outdoor visual entertainment.



#### §13.9.4. Temporary Signs

##### A. Defined

Any sign that may easily be moved or removed and that can feasibly be displayed for a limited period of time in any one location.

##### B. General standards

Maximum size	7 sq. ft.
Maximum height	4 ft.
Number allowed	No limit
Permit required?	No
Separate lighting?	No
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Commercial messages?	No

##### C. Other standards

- g. Temporary signs allowed by this section shall be removed within 45 days of installation or within seven days of the end of any event to which they refer, whichever may first occur.
- h. Temporary signs allowed by this section shall be firmly affixed to the ground or to a structure to prevent movement.

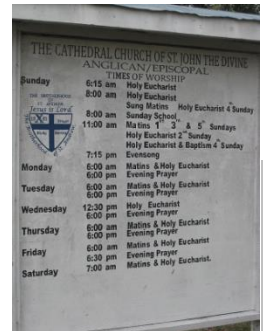
#### §13.9.5. Wall Signs

##### ~~2. Defined~~

~~Any sign that is affixed directly to or suspended from a building wall, marquee, mansard wall, or parapet wall of a building, with the exposed face of the sign in a plane approximately parallel to the face of the wall. A wall sign may be either of one-piece construction or of individual connected or related letters or symbols.~~

##### ~~3. General standards~~

<del>Maximum size</del>	<del>4 sq. ft.</del>
<del>Number allowed</del>	<del>1 per public entrance per building</del>
<del>Permit required?</del>	<del>No</del>
<del>Separate lighting?</del>	<del>Yes</del>
<del>Automatic changeable copy?</del>	<del>No</del>
<del>Commercial messages?</del>	<del>No</del>



#### §13.10. Signs in Public Districts and on Public Property in any District

##### §13.10.1. General

The signs in this §13.10 are allowed in S-3A, S-D and P-S districts and on Arlington County Board or Arlington County School Board property in any district or on parks or other public property controlled by Arlington County, subject to the permit requirements, standards and conditions set forth for each sign type. This §13.10 is not applicable to signs in the public right-of-way.

##### A. Public property

For properties owned by the Arlington County Board or the Arlington County School Board, the signs allowed by this §13.10 shall be placed only by or with the specific permission of the County Manager, Board or Arlington County School Board.

**B. Lighting**

Signs allowed under this §13.10 shall not be separately lighted unless the standard in the table says “yes” or “see standards” next to the “separately lighted?” query. The fact that a sign may be partly or wholly illuminated by light serving another purpose shall not be considered “separately lighted.”

**C. Changeable copy**

Signs allowed under this §13.10 shall not include automatic changeable copy elements unless the standard in the table says “yes” next to the “automatic changeable copy?” query. See §13.13 for standards that apply to all automatic changeable copy signs under this Article 13.

**D. Aggregate sign area allowed**

The maximum aggregate sign area allowed for a property, single building or combination of buildings, is one square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage. Aggregate sign area may be allocated as defined in §18.2

**E. Additional sign area for specified uses**

Any building in a P-S district ~~that is more than 70 feet in height~~ may install up to two additional signs above a height of 40 feet, meeting the following standards.

1. Illumination standards shall be as set forth in §13.12.
2. Maximum area of each additional sign shall be limited as follows:

Height of building	Maximum sign area (sq. ft. )
<u>Less than 70 ft.</u>	<u>No multiplier. Each sign shall not exceed 75 sq. ft.</u>
70 ft. – 100 ft.	0.6 x bldg. width at height of sign
<del>404</del> <u>&gt;100</u> ft. – 200 ft.	1.0 x bldg. width at height of sign
<del>&gt;204</del> <u>200</u> ft.	1.5 x bldg. width at height of sign

3. In order to protect the viewshed for properties in residential districts ~~in that face commercial areas of the County and, the following provisions are set forth~~ in order to limit visibility of signs placed above a height of 40 feet from areas planned primarily for residential development:-

~~(a) Horizontally oriented signs shall fit within a sign band that is no more than six feet in height, provided, however, that up to 20 percent of the sign may be no more than nine feet in height. The designated sign band shall be placed within the 20 feet of the building façade below the main roofline or other roofline of the building below the main roofline for a building where there is multiple rooflines;~~

~~(b) Vertically oriented signs shall be placed such that the top of the sign is above a height of 40 feet.~~

(c) No sign placed above a height of 40 feet shall have any automatic changeable copy element.

(d) All signs placed above a height of 40 feet may be illuminated only by internal lighting and hours of illumination shall be as set forth in §13.12.3.

(e) Signs placed above a height of 40 feet may be placed on building facades perpendicular to or facing away from the line identified as Line A on Map 13-1, but shall not be placed on facades facing Line A (a façade shall be considered to be facing Line A if it is less than 90 degrees from parallel). Provided, however, that lighted signs may be placed on building facades abutting streets parallel to Line A if the building façade is not within 200 feet of an R or RA district, and the applicant demonstrates that view of the sign is substantially blocked from the aforementioned districts by a building or other structure of equal or greater height to the height of the sign. Placement of signs above a height of 40 feet may be allowed by the Zoning Administrator as set forth in this paragraph 3(e), or the standards in this paragraph 3(e), or may be modified by the County Board, only as set forth in §13.3.1.A.2(d).

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## **§13.15. Comprehensive Sign Plans Approved After July 24, 2012**

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A comprehensive sign plan shall include all signs for a development project. Once approved, a comprehensive sign plan becomes the governing document for signs on a development project, and permits will be issued only for signs shown on the comprehensive sign plan.

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### **§13.15.1. Applicability**

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- A. A comprehensive sign plan is optional and may be approved for premises subject to §13.6 or §13.7;
- B. A comprehensive sign plan is required for urban regional shopping centers, or portions thereof, that opt to use §13.8.
- C. A comprehensive sign plan approved by the County Board prior to July 24, 2012 shall remain in effect unless replaced by a new comprehensive sign plan filed by the owners and approved in accordance with the provisions of this §13.15, or unless an election is made under §13.18.3.D.2 to have signs permitted without a comprehensive sign plan; and
- D. The requirements of an approved comprehensive sign plan shall apply to all property, buildings, uses and establishments within the development project.

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### **§13.15.2. Required plan elements**

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The comprehensive sign plan shall provide the following information related to all proposed signs that require a permit and that are included in aggregate sign area:

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#### **A. Location**

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Identification of sign locations on buildings or property, including showing:

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1. Setbacks from property or right-of-way lines for any freestanding sign;
2. Depth of projection;
3. Height above grade; and
4. For blade signs, clearance below.

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#### **B. Materials and illumination**

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Description of the type of sign and sign materials, including:

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1. Construction materials; and
2. Proposed lighting, if any.

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#### **C. Size**

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1. Itemization of sign length, width and total area for each sign size and/or size of any defined sign band area at identified locations with clear notations to show previously approved signs, proposed signs, and any signs to be removed; and
2. Total sign area per frontage, per sign type and overall for the project; and



- 306 3. Total aggregate sign area allowed for each street frontage, and where applicable,  
307 each tenant.

308 **D. Allocation of sign area**

- 309 1. Except as otherwise permitted in §13.8, aggregate sign area for all signs in a  
310 comprehensive sign plan shall be the larger of:

- 311 (a) One square foot of sign per linear foot of building frontage; or  
312 (b) For a building with at least one exterior public entrance and one or more  
313 establishments with less than 60 feet of frontage, 60 sq. ft. for each such  
314 establishment plus one square foot per linear foot of building frontage  
315 excluding any frontage not occupied by those establishments.

316 ~~One sq. ft. of sign area per linear foot of building frontage; plus~~

- 317 2. Additional aggregate sign area for a comprehensive sign plan ~~For buildings in any C~~  
318 ~~district except C-1-R, C-1, C-1-O, C-2 and C-O-1.0, shall include one additional sq. ft.~~  
319 ~~of sign area for each linear foot of façade (the length of a straight line measured~~  
320 ~~from one end of the building wall of the façade to the other end of the same wall,~~  
321 ~~where neither articulations nor off-sets in the wall shall increase the length of the~~  
322 ~~façade), counting only those portions of the building façade approved for retail use~~  
323 ~~and that have at least one exterior public entrance per tenant, for each of the~~  
324 ~~following (when not already counted in §13.7.1.D.2(a) 13.15.2.D.1 above):~~

- 325 (a) Any façade fronting a Pedestrian Priority Street or Shared Street as defined in  
326 the Arlington County Master Transportation Plan;

- 327 (b) Any façade fronting an area meeting all of the following criteria:

- 328 (1) Provides an unenclosed park or plaza open to the public shown on an  
329 adopted sector, small area or revitalization plan; or provides an unenclosed  
330 park or plaza open to the public located as required by an approved site  
331 plan condition(s); and

- 332 (2) Has at least a portion at grade with the adjacent sidewalk; and

- 333 (3) Is contiguous with the public right-of-way; and

- 334 (4) Is not separated from the building façade by an off-street parking area;

- 335 (c) Any portion of building façade counted in §13.7.1.D.2(a), (b)(1) or (b)(2)  
336 §13.15.2.D.2(a), 13.15.D.2(b)(1) or (b)(2) above, that contains two stories  
337 approved for retail use that are each at least ten feet above finished grade and  
338 have at least one exterior public entrance per tenant; ~~plus~~

- 339 (d) For a building with one or more establishments with at least one exterior public  
340 entrance and less than 60 feet of cumulative frontage and façade counted in  
341 §13.15.1.D.2(a), (b) and (c) above, 60 sq. ft. for each such establishment minus  
342 the length of any frontage already counted in §13.15.1.D.2(a), (b) and (c) above.

- 343 3. Subject to size, location, and setback standards specified in §13.6, §13.7 or §13.8  
344 for the applicable district, the applicant for a comprehensive sign plan may allocate  
345 permitted aggregate sign area among the walls of various buildings and, to the  
346 extent allowed by §13.6, §13.7 or §13.8, among freestanding signs, to favor one

347 tenant or series of tenants, provided the comprehensive sign plan identifies how  
348 available sign area is allocated ~~and sign type~~ for each tenant.

349 For a single building or combination of buildings with a comprehensive sign plan,  
350 the aggregate sign area allowed is the sum of:  
351

352 **§13.15.3. Additional signs**

353 In addition to otherwise allowed signs, premises subject to §13.7 shall be allowed additional  
354 banners and wall or freestanding signs as part of a comprehensive sign plan, provided that the  
355 locations and designs of the signs are shown on an approved comprehensive sign plan and that  
356 such signs are in accordance with the following standards for the subject sign type. For  
357 premises subject to §13.10, such additional signs shall be allowed without a comprehensive  
358 sign plan.

**A. Banners**

**1. General standards**

Maximum number	2 per pole, as approved on comprehensive sign plan
Maximum size	6 sq. ft. on each side; may be 2-sided
Minimum clearance above sidewalk	8'6"
Permit required?	Yes, single permit may cover multiple banners
Separate lighting?	No
Commercial messages?	No
Automatic changeable copy?	No
Included in aggregate sign area?	No

**2. Other standards**

- (a) Banners in this subsection §13.15.3.A are allowed only for property included in an approved comprehensive sign plan and only in accordance with the provisions of the approved plan;
- (b) Banners in this §13.15.3.A are allowed only on street light poles. Such poles shall be:
  - (1) Approved on or consistent with a County-approved site engineering plan for the project;
  - (2) Installed primarily for other purposes, such as site lighting;
  - (3) Located in a parking lot, along a private street or on private property along a public or private plaza or courtyard;
  - (4) Two banners shall be allowed on a pole only if the two banners are of the same size and are mounted at the same height; and
  - (5) Banners on poles must be attached at all corners such that they do not move or flap.

**3. Other permits or approvals**

Banners on poles will be allowed only with the express consent of the owner(s) of the underlying real property and the pole(s).



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## 4. Wall or freestanding signs

### 4. General standards

Maximum size	Wall: 6 sq. ft.; freestanding 12 sq. ft.
Maximum height	Freestanding: 7 ft.
Number allowed	Wall: 1 per building; freestanding: 1 per every two buildings in a multi-building project
Permit required?	Yes
Separate lighting?	Yes
Automatic changeable copy?	Yes, with frequency of change of copy less than once per 24 hours
Commercial messages?	Yes
Included in aggregate sign area?	No

### 5. Other standards

- (a) Additional signs under this §13.15.3.B are allowed only for buildings or projects with approved comprehensive sign plans and only in locations shown on the approved plan.
- (b) Commercial content shall not be legible from a distance of more than six feet.
- (c) Signs that change only through manipulation by the user shall be deemed not to be automatic changeable copy signs and shall not be subject to the limitations in §13.12.2.A.



## §13.16. Temporary Signs for Construction Sale/Leasing

The following additional signs [identified in this §13.16](#) are permitted without permits, [except where specifically identified](#), during periods of construction or sale/leasing of property or space other than at one-family and two-family dwellings:

### §13.16.1. Additional Purposes

To address the substantial amount of new construction, redevelopment and remodeling of buildings within the County, the following purposes, supplementing those set forth in §13.1 support the adoption of special provisions for signs for construction projects, new buildings and empty spaces in existing projects:

- A. The County must provide services even to partially occupied buildings;
- B. Promoting occupancy of new buildings in the County encourages economic development by enlarging the tax base;
- C. The cost of media advertising is too expensive for all but the largest projects;
- D. Many potential occupants for a new or remodeled project are likely to pass by the site during the period of construction; and
- E. On-site advertising is a particularly effective, as well as affordable, means of advertising and helping to ensure occupancy of these projects and promoting future business, thus encouraging economic development within the County.

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**§13.16.2. New or remodeled building**

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**A. General standards**

Any new building or any building that has been substantially vacant during a remodeling process may have, in addition to other signs permitted by this Article 13, either:

1. Signs on construction fencing as set forth in §13.16.2.C.3; or
2. A total of 120 sq. ft. of banners as set forth in §13.16.2.C.1; or
3. Freestanding signs that do not exceed 15 feet in height as set forth in §13.16.2.C.2.



- B.** Such signs shall be removed by the first of the following to occur: one year after the issuance of the shell and core permit; or the sale or lease of the building or property or, for a multi-occupant property, the sale or lease of 80 percent of the gross leasable area of the building.

**C. Sign standards for new or remodeled buildings**

**1. Banners for new or remodeled building**

- (a) The banner shall be no larger than the 120 sq. ft. per main building on a lot;
- (b) Any banner shall be firmly affixed at all corners to prevent its movement with air currents; and
  - (1) After issuance of a certificate of occupancy and before installation of an allowed permanent freestanding or wall sign; such a banner shall be removed upon the installation of the permanent sign or the expiration of six months from the date of installation of the banner, whichever first occurs.
  - (2) For a “grand opening” of a new establishment or an establishment with a substantial change in ownership or control; such a banner may be displayed for a period of not more than 30 days.
- (c) If the banner is within 200 feet and facing an R district, the highest part of the banner shall not be more than 40 feet above the finished grade as shown on the approved site plan.

**2. Freestanding sign for new or remodeled building**

- (a) The freestanding sign shall be no larger than the 120 sq. ft. per main building on the lot; and
- (b) The freestanding sign shall be no more than 15 feet in height.



### 3. Construction fencing

For new construction, remodeling or other modifications during which there is no occupancy of the building and for which fencing of the construction site is provided, screening attached to the fence may bear images or text, provided that text and numbers shall occupy no more than the larger of the following area:



(a) 120 sq. ft. on each street frontage; or

(b) 20 percent of the area of the screening on a construction fence along each street frontage.

### §13.16.3. Other buildings

- A. For any spaces for which window signs are allowed, window signs conforming with §13.7.14 may be used during periods of sale or leasing; if the owner or occupant of a vacant space chooses to cover the entire ground-floor window(s) of such space, the size limit shall apply only to the portion of the covering that contains text and numbers, using the same method of measurement used to measure signs under §13.19.1.
- B. Any permanent sign allowed by §13.6 or §13.7, identified as included in aggregate sign area, and placed below a height of 40 feet, may be used during periods of sale or leasing, or be wholly or partly covered with a temporary banner during periods of sale or leasing, provided that the size of the banner shall not exceed the size of the permitted sign and provided that the banner shall be firmly affixed at all four corners to prevent it moving with air currents.
- C. Where the vacancy rate of a building subject to §13.7 exceeds 33 percent, as determined by the county manager or his or her designee based on a comprehensive database of commercial real estate information, and if the building has had a certificate of occupancy for more than one year, and the building cannot accommodate a sign due to placement of windows, architectural features, and the like, then a temporary freestanding sign may be permitted subject to review by [and a permit issued by](#) the zoning administrator to determine whether the location and design of the freestanding sign will meet all requirements of this zoning ordinance. The sign shall be no larger than 20 sq. ft. in area and no higher than 18 feet in height. The sign shall be removed immediately upon the vacancy rate of the building falling below 33 percent, but in any event, within 6 months after the date of approval of such sign by the zoning administrator.
- D. [Where access to the main entrance to an establishment is hindered by construction on a street abutting the main entrance, the establishment may place the following signs, during the construction, and until 30 days following completion of the construction.](#)
- [Signs on construction fencing as set forth in §13.16.2.C.3; or](#)
  - [A total of 120 sq. ft. of banners as set forth in §13.16.2.C.1.](#)



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