



**STAFF REPORT
WEST ALLIS PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, June 26, 2019
6:00 PM**

Room 128 – City Hall – 7525 W. Greenfield Ave.

11. Ordinance to amend Subsections 13.215(2)(6)(10)(16)(18)(19) of the Downtown Signage Ordinance relative to updating definitions, types of prohibited signs and updates to the changeable copy signs section within the Downtown West Allis Signage Ordinance

Overview

The Business Improvement District has requested a signage ordinance amendment to allow businesses within the Downtown District an additional allowance for changeable copy window signage.

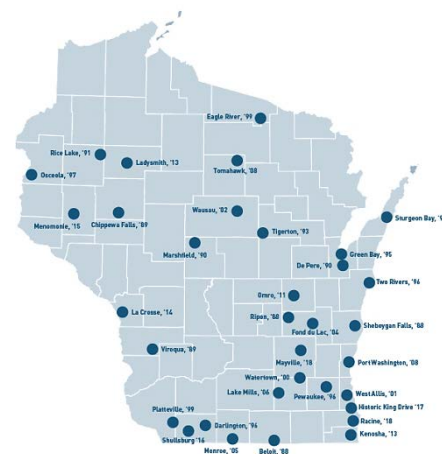
The existing sign ordinance allows changeable copy signage when integrated as part of a freestanding, wall or a projecting sign. Furthermore, the changeable copy portion of the sign must occupy a secondary position so that the area of changeable copy does not exceed thirty-five percent (35%) of the sign face.

Staff has prepared an ordinance amendment to update the downtown sign ordinance in accordance with the BID's request. The ordinance amendment is sponsored by an Alderperson. The ordinance will come before the Common Council on July 16 for consideration. Updates to the ordinance include new definitions, and revision to section 13.215(19) changeable copy signage.



For reference a link to the existing Central Business District (Downtown) side code: [13.215 RMC](#)
The proposed changes are linked here: [13.215 amendment](#)

West Allis is one of over 30 Wisconsin Main Street Communities (Part of WI Economic Development Corporation). WEDC's downtown development programs are designed to help communities identify necessary initiatives, stakeholders and resources to make their downtown or urban commercial district a more vibrant and engaging place to live, work and play. As a partner of the Main Street Wisconsin Program, the State organization offers promotion and design services to foster a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers and visitors while preserving a place's historic character.



Staff notes that the proposed amendment would interfere with the existing purpose of the Districts sign ordinance: **Existing sign ordinance - Purpose statement 13.215(1)**

Purpose. It is declared that the regulation of signs within the Central Business District (Downtown) is necessary and in the public interest to:

- (a) Preserve the unique and historic character of the Downtown and protect property values within the City.*
- (b) Reduce visual clutter, establish and promote a clean and attractive environment and stimulate economic growth and stability.*
- (c) Promote a healthy and properly designed business environment by aesthetically complementing the development, which a sign identifies.*
- (d) Provide for the expression of both commercial and noncommercial speech.*
- (e) Provide for the identification and advertising needs of businesses.*
- (f) Safeguard the general public from damage and injury, which may be caused by the faulty and uncontrolled construction of signs within the City.*
- (g) Protect against hazards to vehicular traffic movement through improper placement of signs.*



Recommendation: Staff does not recommend Common Council passage of the Ordinance to amend Subsections 13.215(2)(6)(10)(16)(18)(19) of the Downtown Signage Ordinance relative to updating definitions, types of prohibited signs and updates to the changeable copy signs section within the Downtown West Allis Signage Ordinance based on the following:

- (a)** The existing ordinance provides for the expression of both commercial and noncommercial speech, business identification and advertising needs. A changeable copy signage allowance is already allowed within the existing signage ordinance;
- (b)** The requested window signage allowance will result in excessive amount of signage clutter, distraction, reduced aesthetics/image within Downtown West Allis, a WI Main Street community.
- (c)** The ordinance amendment does enhance or preserve the unique and historic character of the Downtown and protect property values within the City.