



# City of West Allis

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** O-2019-0025, **Version:** 1

---

Ordinance to amend Subsections 13.215(2), (6), (10), (16), (18), and (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

The Common Council of the City of West Allis do ordain as follows:

\*\*\*

PART I. Subsection 13.215(2) of the Revised Municipal Code of the City of West Allis is hereby amended to replace specific existing terms and definitions with updated terms and definitions below:

### 13.215(2) Definitions

(2) Definitions. As used in this section:

\*\*\*

**Changeable copy sign:** A sign or portion thereof on which the copy or display changes either automatically through electrical or electronic means, or manually through placement of letters or symbols on a panel mounted in or on a track system, or via an electronic digital display using incandescent lamps, LEDs, LCDs or a flipper matrix or similar display.

\*\*\*

**Flashing sign:** A sign whose artificial illumination is not kept constant in intensity at all times when in use and which exhibits changes in light, color, direction, or animation. For the purposes of this sign ordinance display at intervals three (3) seconds or more shall not be considered flashing.

\*\*\*

**"Freestanding sign"** means any sign which is supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground; and that is independent and detached from any building or other structure.

\*\*\*

**"Projecting sign"** means a sign attached to a wall and projecting away (generally perpendicular) from a wall.

\*\*\*

**Storefront:** The exterior facade of a building for a commercial use, visible from a street, sidewalk, or other pedestrian way accessible to the public and containing the primary entrance to the commercial establishment.

\*\*\*

**"Window area"** means the transparent portion of a window within a frame. The area of transparent glazing (glass), within the frame of a single window unit, section or bay. The window area is calculated by measuring the width of window glazing set within vertical dividers, or a buildings structural materials (ie. brick columns), by the window height. Non-transparent glass is not considered a window.

\*\*\*

**Window sign:** Any sign that is applied, painted, or affixed to a window, or placed inside a window area, within two (2) feet of the glass, facing the outside of the building as to be seen from the outside.

\*\*\*

PART II. Subsection 13.215 (10) of the Revised Municipal Code of City of West Allis is hereby amended as follows:

(10) Prohibited Signs, Lighting and Movement.

(a) Lighting. Unless otherwise noted in the specific subsection, no flashing lights shall be permitted for either permanent or temporary signs. Illumination shall be so installed to avoid any glare or reflection into any adjacent property, or onto a street or alley to create a traffic hazard as determined by the Building Inspections and Neighborhood Services Department.

(b) Prohibited Signs, Lighting and Movement. It is unlawful to erect or maintain the following:

\*\*\*

7. Strobe lights, laser lights, mobile or ground mounted search lights.
8. Lighting which is used to outline a building, structure, or window (examples include but not limited to rope, LED, and fluorescent tube lighting).
9. All prohibited signs not mentioned in this section.

\*\*\*

PART III. Subsection 13.215(18) of the Revised Municipal Code of City of West Allis is hereby amended as follows:

(18) Illuminated Signs. Illuminated signs are permitted subject to the following regulations:

\*\*\*

- (e) Prohibitions. Flashing light is prohibited. Display at intervals three (3) seconds or more shall not be considered flashing.
- (f) Changeable copy signage Brightness/Lighting limits. The night-time illumination of an EMC shall conform with the criteria set forth in this section.
  1. Measurement Criteria. The illuminance of a changeable copy sign shall not exceed 0.3 foot candles above ambient lighting levels as measured by an illuminance light meter set to measure foot candles accurate to at least two decimals. Illuminance shall be measured with the sign off, and again with the sign displaying a white image for a full color-capable sign, or a solid message for a single-color sign. All measurements shall be taken as close as practical to a perpendicular plane of the sign at the distance determined by the total square footage of the sign as set forth in the accompanying sign area versus measurement distance formula as follows: In feet, measurement distance equals the square root of the sum of the sign square footage multiplied by one hundred (100).  
Measurement Distance =  $\sqrt{\text{Area of Sign Sq. Ft.} \times 100}$
  2. Dimming Capabilities: All permitted changeable copy signs shall be equipped with a sensor or other device that automatically determines the ambient illumination and programmed to automatically dim according to ambient light conditions, or that can be adjusted to comply with the 0.3 footcandle measurements.

PART IV. Subsection 13.215 (19) of the Revised Municipal Code of City of West Allis is hereby amended as follows:

(19) Changeable Copy Signs. Changeable copy signs are permitted subject to the following regulations:

- (a) Sign Type. Changeable Copy Signs are permitted as an accessory to certain types of signage including freestanding, projecting or window signage.

- (b) Area.
  - 1. Freestanding or projecting changeable copy signage. When used as part of a freestanding or a projecting sign, a changeable copy signage shall not exceed 35% of the sign's area.
  - 2. Window changeable copy signage. When used in a window, changeable copy signage shall not exceed 20% of the window area.
- (c) Number.
  - 1. Freestanding or projecting changeable copy signage. When used as part of a freestanding or a projecting sign, one (1) changeable copy sign is allowed per property.
  - 2. Window sign. When used in a window, a maximum of one changeable copy sign is allowed per storefront. In the case of a corner or double street frontage, only one changeable copy sign shall be allowed.
- (d) Design.
  - 1. Freestanding sign. When used in the form of a freestanding sign refer to the specific requirements in section 13.215(23) additionally:
    - i. The sign may be double-faced.
    - ii. Each sign shall be permanently installed or located.
    - iii. Each sign shall be placed outside vision angles and in such a manner so as to not interfere with, confuse or present any hazard to pedestrians or vehicle traffic.
    - iv. Changeable copy signage shall not be allowed along the alley frontage.
  - 2. Projecting or window sign. When used as part of a projecting or as part of a window refer to the specific requirements in sections 13.215(14) and 13.215(16) relative to projecting and window signage, additionally :
    - i. The sign may be double-faced.
    - ii. Each sign shall be permanently installed or located.
    - iii. Illuminated sign standards subject to 13.215(18)
    - iv. Window signage shall be located on the interior side of storefront glass.
    - v. Changeable copy signage shall not be allowed along the alley frontage.

ZON-O-1189-7-8-19-Downtown Sign Ordinance

Plan Commission does not recommend approval. To be placed on file.