



City of West Allis

Legislation Text

File #: O-2009-0028, **Version:** 1

Ordinance to amend Section 13.215 of the Revised Municipal Code relative to permitting freestanding signs and electronic message centers in the C-1 Central Business District.

WHEREAS, the City of West Allis Central Business District located on W. Greenfield Avenue, between South 70 and 76 Streets, is the historic "downtown" area of the City. The District's built environment addresses W. Greenfield Avenue and encompasses traffic control measures at every intersection within the downtown, creating a low-speed vehicular environment that is unique to the City; and,

WHEREAS, adequate signage is important to business and civic institutions for identification and advertising and therefore needs to be provided for.

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

PART I. Section 13.215 of the Revised Municipal Code of the City of West Allis is hereby amended by re-numbering subsections (23) and (24) to read as (24) and (25).

PART II. Subsection 13.215(23) of the Revised Municipal Code of the City of West Allis is hereby created to read:

13.215 Central Business District (Downtown) Sign Code.

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(23) Freestanding Signs.

(a) Architecture and Landscaping.

1. Freestanding signs must be architecturally integrated with the principal building on the property. The base, sides, and top of the sign shall be constructed of masonry or other approved durable materials. The tone and texture of the base, sides, and top shall reflect the principal building construction as close as possible or shall enhance the exterior architecture of the principal building. The base of the sign shall be a minimum of two feet in height.

2. The color scheme of the sign shall compliment the color scheme of the principal building.

3. Architectural features (such as sills, piers, reveals, capstones, medallions, etc.), which are part of the architectural makeup of the principal building, shall be incorporated into the sign.

4. The sign face shall be constructed of aluminum, masonry, or similar product or polycarbonate with an opaque background or other approved durable materials. If internally illuminated, the sign face must be constructed of an opaque background.

5. The sign structure or post of a freestanding sign must be wrapped in or constructed of a material compatible with the materials utilized in the construction of the building to which the sign refers. The width of the base of the sign must be equal to or greater than the width of the sign face.

6. Landscaping Requirements. Landscaping shall be provided at the base of the supporting structure equal to twice the area of one face of the sign. For example, 20 square feet of sign area = 40 square feet of landscaped area. The

Department of Development may reduce or waive this requirement if it is determined the additional landscaping would not contribute significantly to the overall aesthetic character of the project.

7. The Department of Development may approve, deny or request changes to a sign, based on the architecture of that sign.
 - (b) Size Requirements and Location.
 1. Number. One freestanding sign shall be permitted on each lot or parcel of land.
 2. Area. The maximum area of a freestanding sign shall not exceed 25 sq. ft. in area.
 3. The sign may have multiple faces if so approved.
 4. Height. The maximum height of a freestanding sign may not exceed eight (8) feet. The applicant shall provide dimensions of the proposed sign. The height of a freestanding sign shall be regulated and approved by the Department of Development in consideration of the location of the proposed sign; the height, size, appearance, number and location of other signs in the vicinity of the proposed sign; the propriety of the proposed sign with respect to a master sign plan, if any; and such other facts as the Department of Development deems appropriate.
 5. Location. An offset of no less than one (1) foot from the ultimate right of way line should be maintained.
 - a. The sign shall be located in an area of meaningful open space, which shall be appropriately landscaped, including some year-round plantings.
 - b. Site consideration should be given to signs on corner lots, near driveways and/or alleys, etc. Signs are not to obstruct the vision triangle (see Figure 1 below). Signs proposed within the vision triangle shall require Plan Commission approval.

See Figure 1: Vision Triangle Restrictions in attachment

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PART III. Subsection 13.215(19) of the Revised Municipal Code of the City of West Allis is hereby amended to read:

13.215 Central Business District (Downtown) Sign Code.

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(19) **Changeable copy signs and electronic message centers.** Changeable copy and EMC signs are permitted subject to the following regulations:

(a) Area. The computation of sign area for changeable copy signs and electronic message centers shall be included in the total permitted sign area allowed for the building or development where changeable copy signs and electronic message centers are permitted by this section and/or by the Department of Development.

1. The changeable copy portion of the sign must occupy a secondary position to the name of tenant. The area of changeable copy and electronic message centers shall not exceed thirty-five percent (35%) of the sign face.

(b) Number. There shall be only one changeable copy sign or electronic message center on each lot or parcel of land.

(c) Design. Changeable copy signs and electronic message centers must be integrated into freestanding sign, wall sign or projecting sign for such building or development.

1. Electronic message centers may change a message or display by an electronic process, with no frequency restrictions; however, flashing of a message or display is not permitted;
2. The sign may be double-faced;
3. Each sign shall be permanently installed or located;
4. Each sign shall be placed in such a manner so as to not interfere with, confuse or present any hazard to traffic.

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PART IV. Subsection 13.215(2), the definition of "Flashing sign," of the Revised Municipal Code of the City of West Allis is hereby amended to read:

13.215 Central Business District (Downtown) Sign Code.

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(2) Definitions. As used in this section:

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"Flashing sign" means a type of changeable copy sign upon which a message blinks repetitively.

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PART V. All ordinances or parts of ordinance contravening the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

PART VI. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and publication.

cc: Department of Development
City Attorney's Office
Department of Building Inspections

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