



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING, HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
Planning Division

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Historical Affairs and Landmarks Review Board Members

FROM: Deborah Albert

DATE: 3-15-2011

SUBJECT: Proposed Sign Regulations Update – Signs in Historic Districts

Since February 2011, staff has been drafting a comprehensive revision to the sign regulations in the Zoning Ordinance. The HALRB last reviewed draft ordinance language at the September 2011 HALRB meeting. At this time, staff is preparing a near-final draft of the proposed amendment in preparation for public review and July consideration by the County Board. Revised draft regulations are attached for your review.

The attached includes excerpts of the current draft of proposed sign regulations that apply to signs in historic districts and to signs on certain historic buildings where specific agreements or deed restrictions require approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA). While the proposed draft amendment would codify specific standards for all signs such that they could be approved administratively by the Zoning Administrator, and would limit opportunities to request modifications to codified regulations, certain exceptions are included for signs on buildings for which a CoA is required. The intent of the attached zoning language is as follows:

- For buildings for which a CoA is required, the draft amendment would provide authority to the HALRB to approve signs that may not meet all Zoning Ordinance requirements, so long as the sign is consistent with existing policy guidance and any design guidelines established for the subject district or building.

- Existing signs on historic buildings for which a CoA is required would be established as conforming signs, and therefore would not be subject to limitations typically applied to signs that do not conform with all current zoning regulations. This would provide flexibility for such signs to be maintained and/or altered as appropriate, subject to approval of a CoA.

Anticipated schedule for advertising and final consideration by the County Board

- June 16, 2012: County Board Request to Advertise
- July 9, 2012: Planning Commission public hearing
- July 21, 2012: County Board public hearing

Certain signs in historic areas

This Section 34 shall not apply to signs to which Section 31A[subsection] is applicable.
[see 34.18 Miscellaneous Signs]

711 **§34.16. Nonconforming signs**

712 **A. Applicability**

713 Nonconforming signs are signs that met all ordinance requirements at the time of
714 installation or placement but which, due to ordinance changes, do not comply with current
715 requirements.

716 **B. Effect on signs on historic buildings**

717 Notwithstanding the “Applicability” provisions of §34.2, this Section 34 shall have no effect
718 on any sign within a historic district designated by the County Board. Such signs shall be
719 considered conforming signs and may be modified or replaced in accordance with the
720 terms of this section applicable to conforming signs and in accordance with the terms of
721 Section 31A of the Zoning Ordinance.

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D. Historic - [add to 31A]

- 1. For all signs for which a Certificate of Appropriateness is required:
 - (a) The Historical Affairs and Landmarks Review Board shall approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign or modification of a sign in an historic district only if it finds that:
 - (1) The size, scale and design of the sign shall be compatible with the size, scale and design of the property, building or site upon which it is to be located;
 - (2) The materials used in the sign shall be compatible with the period and style of the property, building or site;
 - (3) The lighting of the sign shall be consistent with the period and style of the property, building, site or district, as applicable;
 - (4) The location of the sign shall not obscure any significant architectural features of the building or site; and
 - (5) Installation of the sign shall not irreparably damage any cornice, ornament or similar architectural detail and shall be the least damaging method feasible for the property, building or site.
 - (b) If the Historical Affairs and Landmarks Review Board determines that no sign identifying a business can both meet the standards for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness and be in compliance with this Section 34, then the Historical Affairs and Landmarks Review Board may approve a sign that does not comply with this Section 34, but meets the standards for a Certificate of Appropriateness, such sign may be allowed.