

USING **SIGNS** TO ENHANCE **YOUR BUSINESS**

DOWNTOWN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS




**DOWNTOWN
SHAREHOLDERS**

726 Armstrong Ave Suite 201
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
www.downtownkck.org

PURPOSE OF SIGNS

The 2007 Downtown Master Plan calls for **cohesively designed** signage that provides **clear identification of downtown** businesses. The Master Plan recognizes the importance of signs to the appearance and attractiveness of Downtown Kansas City, Kansas. All buildings downtown should contain sign panels that help, with other architectural elements, to **define and beautify** the body of a building. In addition to helping orient visitors in automobiles, signs used by downtown businesses should also help direct pedestrians, through the use of smaller wall, projecting or window signs.

SIGN TYPES



A Pole or Pylon Sign is a freestanding, detached sign elevated on uprights, braces, columns, poles, or other vertical structures.

A Marquee is a permanent structure constructed of rigid materials such as steel, wood, masonry, and glass that projects from the exterior wall of a building. Marquees usually have at least three sides that can contain signs or messages advertising a business or services. Because of their rigid structure, marquees often contain electric lights and electronic displays.

*For illustration purposes only. This graphic shows more signs than are allowed for any individual building.

A Wall Sign or Building Sign is a sign that is attached to and erected parallel to the wall of a building or structure in such a manner that the wall becomes the supporting structure for, or forms the background surface of the sign. A wall sign or building sign cannot project more than 12 inches from the building or structure. Signs on awnings, canopies or marquees are considered wall signs.

Other examples of wall signs include:

- illuminated signs
- pin-mounted letters and logos cut from solid material such as wood, metal, or plastic
- channel-cut signs that are internally-illuminated and mounted on a building surface.

A Roof Sign is a sign located above and secured to the roof of a building, which projects above the cornice or parapet of a building with a flat roof, or the eaves or deck of a building with a sloped roof.

A Changeable Message Sign contains different forms of advertising copy that is designed to be changed on a regular basis. This includes but is not limited to reader boards, gas price signs, and theater marquees.

A Projecting Sign is a sign attached to and projecting at a 90-degree angle from a building wall. Projecting signs include horizontal and vertical blade signs, which are narrow, as well as icon signs, which are often three-dimensional logos or objects (such as a tea kettle) associated with a business.

An Awning or Canopy is a retractable or fixed covering consisting of lightweight materials like fabric or fiberglass covering a frame that projects from the exterior wall of a building. Signs are generally attached or painted directly onto the surface of the awning or canopy covering.

A Monument Sign is a detached sign with at least two surfaces attached to a solid base or structural frame. The base of a monument sign must be constructed of masonry, wood, anodized metal, stone or concrete.

A Wall Bulletin is a sign painted on the surface of a building or structure or a painted sign or poster which is attached to but does not project more than 12 inches from the building or structure.



Awnings help to beautify and call attention to a building's entrance. Different colors and patterns on awnings also helps to distinguish tenants within the same building.



Wall Signs can be fabricated from many different materials, but should be installed in visible locations to highlight your business identity. Simple **Window Signs** can be used for the same purpose.



A classic **Marquee** projects from a building's façade and includes lighting and **Changeable Message** boards.



Used sparingly, **Window Signs** can convey lots of information (such as where to park and what types of supplemental items are sold at a business).



Projecting Signs can complement the architectural detailing on older buildings. Contrasting materials like metal and cut letters can enhance this effect.



Monument Signs help to identify your business and offer additional information about your services and tenants. Depending on your property's zoning, Monument Signs may only be allowed in place of a permitted wall sign.



A **Wall Bulletin** can be constructed of beautiful, distinctive materials that call attention to your business identity. They are especially effective when coupled with other façade improvements like awnings.



Well-designed **Pole Signs** can orient visitors to your business location. The siting and orientation of these signs, as well as their quality of construction and materials, is critical.



Painted signs can be used to wrap a building's façade and enliven the streetscape while projecting a distinctive identity for your business.

TEMPORARY SIGNS

Special event displays are temporary signs that may be used on the premises of a business establishment having a grand opening or special event. Portable signs and banners are allowed to be used with a special event display permit for no more than 7 calendar days within a 6 month period (twice a year).

Please note: the Unified Government sign code does not allow the use of balloons, pennants, wind or twirling signs.

Special event banners are temporary banners up to 50 square feet (e.g., 5x10 feet) and may be displayed for special events as wall signs for up to 30 days within any 6 month period.

FORBIDDEN SIGNS

- **Commercial signs** are not allowed in public or private right-of-way, railroad rights-of-way, or within public and private utility easements. Off-premise advertising, including sidewalk and curb signs, is not allowed. With the exception of billboards, signs must be displayed only on the premises of the business that they are advertising.
- **Wind signs, pennants, search lights, twirling signs, sandwich or A-Frame signs, and balloons** are not allowed, nor are rotating and flashing signs. Banners are only allowed as special event displays (see above), and require a permit.
- **Portable signs**, which include any signs mounted on a platform, trailer, or motor vehicle, are prohibited, except when they are granted permits as special event displays (see above).
- **Billboards** and other outdoor advertising signs are allowed only in manufacturing or industrial districts (M-2 or M-3 zoning), and are not allowed on Washington Blvd. No new roof signs may be constructed on or above any building.

MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

All signs are required to be structurally sound, maintained in good repair, and have a clean and neat appearance. The area surrounding a sign must be kept free of debris, weeds and trash. If signs are not properly maintained, code enforcement officials can deem them a public safety hazard or nuisance, and require that they be removed. Property owners are responsible for removing signs that have become obsolete because a business has closed, within six months.

LICENSED SIGN CONTRACTORS

Businesses are generally required to utilize the services of a licensed sign contractor to install signs authorized by UG sign permit applications.

OBTAINING A SIGN PERMIT

Property owners should allow 3-5 business days for the review of a sign permit application.

Sign Permit applications can be obtained from:

Department of Urban Planning and Land Use
701 North 7th Street, Room 423
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
913-573-5750
913-573-5796 (f)
planninginfo@wycokck.org

Sign permit applications are available online at the Unified Government website:

www.wycokck.org/planning/

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Commercial signs cannot be erected, installed, or altered without a sign permit issued by the Unified Government.

No sign permit is required for maintenance of existing signs, such as routine repairs necessary to retain a safe, attractive and finished sign or sign support (including re-painting an existing sign support). All newly constructed signs are required to have a permanently attached label displaying the approved sign permit number.

The following sign types do not require permits:

- For Sale/ Lease
- Construction Site
- Directional signs for drive-through establishments
- Directional signs for parking lots
- Political Signs
- Menu boards for drive-through restaurants
- Incidental signs displaying address numbers
- Danger & No Trespassing signs
- Window signs can be displayed inside a building without a permit, provided that no more than 25% of the total window area contains such signs

ELECTRICAL/OTHER PERMITS

Additional permits may be required based on the design of your sign. A property owner is responsible for obtaining any required electrical permits and inspections, if required, from the Unified Government's Building Inspection department.

Building Inspection
4953 State Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66102
913-573-8620
913-573-8622 (f)
www.wycokck.org/building/



The Downtown Shareholders (DTS) is a membership organization and serves as the primary private sector advocate for the growth and development of Downtown Kansas City, Kansas. As a designated Neighborhood-Business-Revitalization (NBR) organization, DTS operates a number of programs including special event planning, business outreach and marketing services.

DTS also administers the Downtown Improvement District, which deploys 10 ambassadors who provide street maintenance and security services throughout Downtown. DTS has been instrumental in transforming the image of downtown Kansas City, Kansas and setting the stage for increased retail, commercial and housing development.

This Signage Toolkit is provided as a service to downtown businesses and members of Downtown Shareholders. It is intended to provide a general explanation of the process of erecting and installing new signs, or maintaining and improving existing signs. Downtown Shareholders staff are also available to consult with business and property owners to provide advice and feedback about proposed signage, as well as business marketing and redevelopment opportunities.

No part of this Toolkit should be interpreted as authorization for installing, maintaining or erecting a sign. Before installing a new sign or altering an existing sign, please contact the Unified Government's Department of Urban Planning and Land Use (contact information on inner page).

All signs installed downtown must comply with requirements of the Unified Government's sign ordinance, found in Section 27 of the Code of Ordinances. **Unified Government staff have the final say on the requirements and interpretation of the sign ordinance.**