



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Planning and Economic Development Division*

### **m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** Bruce K. Walden

**FROM:** Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, Planning Manager

**DATE:** September 13, 2001

**SUBJECT:** Plan Case No. 1794-T-01: Request by the Zoning Administrator to amend Table IX-3 of the Zoning Ordinance, Standards for Projecting Signs

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### **Introduction**

The Zoning Administrator is requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the allowable area of projecting signs and to allow projecting signs of limited size and with other restrictions to encroach over a portion of the right-of-way in the B-4, Central Business, zone. The purpose of the amendment is to reduce the potential for unsightly and potentially unsafe oversized projecting signs in all business and industrial zones and to encourage the placement of pedestrian-oriented, historically compatible small-size projecting signs in the central business zone, with specific limitations on the design, placement, and density of such signage.

### **Background**

A similar amendment to the Zoning Ordinance was proposed in March, 2001 as part of Plan Case No. 1778-T-01. In response to the earlier amendment, Plan Commission raised a number of technical questions related to the size, placement, orientation, and number of projecting signs that could be placed in the business zones. The Plan Commission further requested input from the Downtown Plan Steering Committee and the Historic Preservation Commission.

The proposed amendments were presented to the Historic Preservation Commission on June 20, 2001. The Historic Preservation Commission recommended that projecting signs be allowed over the right-of-way in the downtown area, with the condition that such signs be limited to no more than 10 square feet in area, be clearly prohibited from upper stories of structures, and that such signs not be internally illuminated. The revised proposed amendments are consistent with the Historic Preservation Commission recommendations.

The proposed amendments to the projecting sign standards were presented to the Downtown Plan Steering Committee at their meeting on May 15, 2001. While no specific action was taken, Committee members viewed the allowance of small-size, design-appropriate projecting signs extending over the right-of-way in the downtown positively. The proposed amendments were discussed further with a Streetscape Subcommittee of the Downtown Plan Steering Committee on August 21, 2001. Again, no specific action was taken.

The Plan Commission also expressed concern that projecting sign regulations be consistent with the provisions of the Downtown Plan. A review draft of the Downtown Plan was received on August 16, 2001. This document does not provide signage guidance for the downtown; however, it does emphasize a pedestrian-orientation for the Main Street/B-4 area. Pedestrian-oriented projecting signs would be consistent with this direction. Staff clarified this direction in discussion with the consultant for the Downtown Plan (Les Pollock of Camiros, Ltd.). Mr. Pollock indicated that he felt that the proposed small-scale projecting signs would be consistent with the character of the downtown, with the suggested further restriction that the minimum vertical clearance for such signs be reduced to 8-feet from the currently required minimum of 9-feet.

The Plan Commission reviewed the proposed amendments at their meeting on September 6, 2001. They recommended approval of the proposed amendments by a vote of 7-0, with the added provision that the minimum vertical clearance be reduced to 8 feet consistent with the Camiros, Ltd. recommendation.

## **Discussion**

Please refer to the Staff Memorandum to Plan Commission dated August 17, 2001 for additional background and discussion of the amendment including illustration of projecting signs.

## **Proposed Amendment**

Attached to this Memorandum is Table IX-3, Standards for Projecting Signs, from the Zoning Ordinance with proposed changes shown with underlines and strikeouts. The proposed changes include:

1. In the B-4 District, allow projecting signs with a maximum area of ten square feet to project into the right-of-way. Such signs may not project more than five feet from the building, or within two feet of the curb face, whichever dimension is smaller. Such signs would be subject to a number of additional restrictions, including the following:
  - a. No more than six (6) inches shall be allowed between the two principal faces of the sign (e.g., the sign depth or thickness), in order to avoid odd-shaped or overly bulky signs.
  - b. Such signs would not be allowed to be internally illuminated. This provision is to avoid the common “bubble” type plastic construction which would not be consistent with the historic nature of the downtown.

- c. A minimum separation of 20 feet must be maintained between such signs; however, in no case should more than one sign per business frontage be permitted. This provision is to prevent a cluttered appearance or proliferation of such signs, but recognizes that historic store fronts may typically be no more than 20 feet in width.
2. Reduce the minimum vertical clearance for projecting signs from 9 feet to 8 feet.
3. Reduce the maximum allowable area for projecting signs as follows:
  - a. from 50 square feet to 32 square feet in the B-3, B-4, and B-4E zones, except for the right-of-way provision for B-4 as mentioned above.
  - b. from 100 square feet to 75 square feet in the IN zone.
4. Clarify that no projecting sign is permitted if a free-standing sign, roof sign, or canopy sign exists on the same business frontage. This amendment would allow for both an unsigned canopy and a projecting sign to exist on the same frontage.
5. Clarify that projecting signs are not allowed above the first story. This amendment would also potentially allow second store businesses to have ground floor projecting signs.

The proposed amendment will provide more options for downtown businesses to increase visibility for their customers. The proposal allows downtown Urbana to retain its character, as projecting signs would only be allowed where other signage does not exist. In addition, the maximum area for projecting signs in business and industrial zones will be reduced to a more reasonable size that is more consistent with the regulations of surrounding communities.

## **Summary of Findings**

1. The proposed amendments would assist in administration and enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance by modifying the size and location standards for projecting signs.
2. The proposed amendments are pursuant to the intent of the Comprehensive Sign Regulations, as defined in Section IX-1, Legislative Intent and Findings, of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.
3. The proposed amendments would encourage smaller-scale pedestrian-level signage in the downtown area consistent with the historic fabric of the downtown.
4. The proposed amendments are consistent with the recommended direction of the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission and Downtown Plan Steering Committee.
5. The proposed amendments would reduce the maximum allowable area of projecting signs in business and industrial zones to a more appropriate level, consistent with surrounding communities.

6. The proposed amendments would reduce the minimum clearance for projecting signs to a level that is consistent with other communities and which will create a more pedestrian-scaled environment.

## **Options**

The City Council has the following options in this case:

- a. approve the proposed text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, as presented herein; or
- b. approve the proposed text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, as modified by specific suggested changes; or
- c. deny the proposed text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the findings outlined above, the Plan Commission voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the text amendment as presented herein. Staff concurs with this recommendation.

Attachments:

Proposed Amendment to Table IX-3, Standards for Projecting Signs  
Proposed Ordinance with revised Table IX-3 attached  
Draft Excerpt of Minutes from Plan Commission meeting of September 6, 2001.

ORDINANCE NO. 2001-09-111

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF URBANA,  
ILLINOIS**

(With Respect to Projecting Signs – Plan Case No. 1794-T-01)

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, adopted Ordinance No. 9293-124 on June 21, 1993 consisting of a comprehensive amendment to the 1979 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Urbana, also known as the Urbana Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Urbana Zoning Administrator has submitted a petition to amend Table IX-3 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow projecting signs with a maximum area of ten square feet to project into the right-of-way in the B-4 District, with the additional provisions that such signs may not project more than five feet from the building, or within two feet of the curb face, whichever dimension is smaller, that no more than six inches shall be allowed between the two principal faces of the sign, that such signs shall not be internally illuminated, and that a minimum separation of 20 feet be maintained between such signs and in no case shall more than one sign per business frontage be permitted; to reduce the minimum vertical clearance for projecting signs from 9 feet to 8 feet; to reduce the maximum allowable area for projecting signs from 50 square feet to 32 square feet in the B-3, B-4, and B-4E zones, except for the right-of-way provision for B-4 noted above, and from 100 square feet to 75 square feet in the IN zone; to clarify that no projecting sign is permitted if a free-standing sign, roof sign, or canopy sign exists on the same business frontage; and to clarify that projecting signs are not allowed above the first story; and

WHEREAS, said petition was presented to the Urbana Plan Commission as Plan Case No. 1794-T-01; and

WHEREAS, after due publication in accordance with Section XI-7 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance and with Chapter 24, Section 11-13-14 of the Illinois Revised Statutes, the Urbana Plan Commission held a public hearing to consider the proposed amendment on September 6, 2001; and

*WHEREAS, the Urbana Plan Commission voted 7 ayes and 0 nays to forward the proposed amendment set forth in Plan Case No. 1794-T-01 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval; and*

WHEREAS, after due and proper consideration, the Urbana City Council has deemed it to be in the best interests of the City of Urbana to amend the text of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance as described herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS, as follows:

Section 1. Table IX-3, Standards for Projecting Signs, is hereby amended to read as follows:

Projecting signs with a maximum area of ten square feet shall be allowed to project into the right-of-way in the B-4 District, with the additional provisions that such signs may not project more than five feet from the building, or within two feet of the curb face, whichever dimension

is smaller, that no more than six inches shall be allowed between the two principal faces of the sign, that such signs shall not be internally illuminated, and that a minimum separation of 20 feet be maintained between such signs and in no case shall more than one sign per business frontage be permitted; to reduce the minimum vertical clearance for projecting signs from 9 feet to 8 feet; to reduce the maximum allowable area for projecting signs from 50 square feet to 32 square feet in the B-3, B-4, and B-4E zones, except for the right-of-way provision for B-4 noted above, and from 100 square feet to 75 square feet in the IN zone; to clarify that no projecting sign is permitted if a free-standing sign, roof sign, or canopy sign exists on the same business frontage; and to clarify that projecting signs are not allowed above the first story.

Section 2. A revised Table IX-3 is hereby attached to this Ordinance.

Section 3. The City Clerk is directed to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form by authority of the corporate authorities. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication in accordance with the terms of Chapter 65, Section 1-2-4 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes (65 ILCS 5/1-2-4).

PASSED by the City Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAINS:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tod Satterthwaite, Mayor



**CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION IN PAMPHLET FORM**

*I, Phyllis D. Clark, certify that I am the duly elected and acting Municipal Clerk of the City of Urbana, Champaign County, Illinois.*

I certify that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001, the corporate authorities of the City of Urbana passed and approved Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, entitled “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS (With Respect to Projecting Signs - Plan Case No. 1794-T-01)” which provided by its terms that it should be published in pamphlet form. The pamphlet form of Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_ was prepared, and a copy of such Ordinance was posted in the Urbana City Building commencing on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001, and continuing for at least ten (10) days thereafter. Copies of such Ordinance were also available for public inspection upon request at the Office of the City Clerk.

DATED at Urbana, Illinois, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001.

(SEAL)

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Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

**TABLE IX-3. STANDARDS FOR PROJECTING SIGNS**

Districts Permitted	Maximum Number Permitted	Maximum Area of Sign	Maximum Height and Projection of Sign	Location of Sign
<p>B-1 Neighborhood Business</p> <p>B-2 Neighborhood Business-Arterial</p> <p>B-3U General Business-University</p> <p>MOR Mixed Office Residential</p> <p>B-3 General Business</p> <p>B-4E Business Expansion</p> <p>B-4 Central Business</p>	<p>One per business frontage, except that no projecting sign is permitted if a free-standing sign, or roof sign, or canopy sign or awning exists on the same business frontage. <del>Upper level businesses are not allowed projecting signs. Projecting signs are not allowed above the first story.</del></p> <p>See Footnote 1 regarding spacing requirements for projecting signs extending over the right-of-way in the B-4 zone.</p>	<p>32 square feet</p> <p>50 32 square feet</p> <p>32 square feet ; 10 square feet if any portion extends over public right-of-way</p>	<p>9-8-foot minimum clearance above ground. No sign shall extend above that portion of the roof immediately adjacent to the sign. No sign shall project more than 5 feet from the face of the building to which it is attached.</p>	<p><i>Not to extend over public right of way.</i></p> <p><u>In the B-4 District, project with a maximum area of 1 feet may project a maximum from the face of the building it is attached, or to within from the curb face, whichever dimension is smaller.<sup>1</sup></u></p>
<p>IN Industrial</p>		<p>400 75 square feet</p>		

Footnote 1. Projecting signs extending over the right-of-way shall not be lit internally; the dimension between the two principal faces (i.e., the thickness or depth) shall not be greater than six (6) inches; and a minimum separation of 20 feet must be maintained between such signs; however in no case should more than one such sign per business frontage be permitted.

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<p>IN Industrial</p>		<p>75 square feet</p>		

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