

ARTICLE XXIII

SIGNS

23.1 Purpose.

Much valuable information is conveyed by certain business signs of local retail and service establishments, to the mutual benefit of both the business establishment and the public. It is the intent of this ordinance to encourage such signs wherever they are moderate in size and design and consistent with the public safety and the welfare of surrounding areas, but to discourage signs which distract the attention of the motorists or are otherwise hazardous, or which create a carnival atmosphere inconsistent with the suburban character of Wheaton.

23.2 Applicability.

1. No sign shall be constructed, erected, remodeled, relocated or expanded unless a sign permit shall have first been issued in accordance with the provisions of this Article.
2. No sign permit shall be issued for any sign unless the sign is accessory to a permitted use.
3. The resolutions of this article relate to the location of signs, by function and type, within the zoning districts and shall be in addition to provisions of the City of Wheaton Building and Electrical codes applicable to the construction and maintenance of signs.
4. No sign permit shall be required for routine maintenance of a sign. A sign permit shall be required prior to a change of the message or sign face.

23.3 Exemptions.

The following types of signs are exempt from the permit requirement and from the regulations of this Article:

1. Flags of a government or of political, civic, philanthropic, educational or religious organizations or bearing corporate logos are permitted subject to the following:
 - a. Three (3) flags which are no larger than fifty (50) square feet in area or which extend beyond the property line of the lot on which installed.
 - b. All flags must be mounted on flag poles. The mounting of flags on light standards or other poles not expressly made as flag standards shall be prohibited.

2. Signs of a duly constituted governmental body, including traffic or similar instructional or regulatory signs relating to health, hazards, parking, swimming, dumping, etc.
3. Memorial signs and tablets displayed on public or private property.
4. Address numerals and other signs required to be maintained by law or governmental order, rule or regulation, provided that the content and size of the sign do not exceed the requirement of such law, order, rule or regulation.
5. A single wall sign identifying a residential building not exceeding one (1) square foot in area indicating the name and/or address of the occupant and, where applicable, a professional status, but not indicating a product or business.
6. Small signs, not exceeding three (3) sq. ft. in area, displayed on private property for the convenience of the public, including signs to identify rest rooms, freight entrances, parking areas and the like.
7. A sign not exceeding nine (9) square feet which designates the conditions of use of a parking lot; such signs are exempt from minimum setback requirements but shall be screened from adjoining property.
8. Decorations temporarily displayed in connection with a local festivity approved by the City Council or a national holiday. Such decorations shall not be displayed more than forty-five (45) days prior to or thirty (30) days after such local festivity or national holiday.
9. Signs identifying property for lease or sale with one (1) sign per lot or per principal structure, except on a corner, double frontage or through lot where two (2) signs are allowed where one (1) sign faces each street. Signs shall be placed on private property and located no closer than one (1) foot to a public sidewalk. On streets where no sidewalks exist, signs shall be located no closer than twenty (20) feet to the edge of the street pavement or twenty (20) feet from the back of curb, if a curb is present. No such sign shall exceed six (6) square feet in area and no such sign shall be illuminated. All such signs must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours of the closing of said property.
10. Campaign signs of no more than sixteen (16) square feet in residential districts or thirty- two (32) square feet in non-residential districts.

23.4 Prohibited Signs.

The following types of signs shall be prohibited:

1. Attention-Getting Devices. No attention getting device, including but not limited to pennants, streamers, festooned lights, perimeter window lighting, whirligigs, nor any sign which is designed to be moved by the wind, shall be permitted, except as provided in this Article.
2. Flashing or Moving Signs. No flashing signs, rotating or moving signs, animated signs, signs with moving lights, or signs creating the illusion of movement, shall be permitted except as provided in this Article. A sign where on the current time and/or temperature is indicated by intermittent lighting shall not be deemed to be a flashing sign if the lighting changes are limited to the numerals indicating the time and/or temperature.
3. Advertising Signs. No sign which directs attention to a business, entertainment, service or commodity shall be permitted unless such business, entertainment, service, or commodity shall be offered, conducted or sold on the premises of which the sign was located.
4. Signs on Vacant Property. No sign shall be located on vacant property except those signs permitted under 23.9.2 (Special Events Signs), Article 23.9.3 (Real Estate Signs), 23.9.4 (Construction Signs), or 23.3.10 (Campaign Signs).
5. Signs on Trees or Utility Poles. No signs shall be attached to a tree or utility pole whether on public or private property.
6. Roof Signs. No part of any sign shall be maintained on the roof, or in the air space over the roof, of any building or structure, including inflatable balloons or other temporary signs.
7. Painted Wall Signs. Any signs which are applied with paint or similar substance on a face of a structural wall shall be prohibited.
8. Portable Signs. Signs designed to be transported to various locations are not permitted, including but not limited to, signs on wheels, signs with trailer hitches, and portable signs with internally illuminated message boards.
9. Misrepresentation. No sign shall be permitted which contains false information or misrepresents the product, service or commodity to be offered, conducted or sold on the premises.
10. Vehicle and Trailer Signs. Except for the allowance provided under Article 24.7.1, it shall be prohibited for any vehicle or trailer which is either: (i) parked on private property ("subject property") and visible from the public right of way, or (ii) parked on the public right of way adjacent to the subject property, to contain any advertising, lettering, graphics, or any other writing or illustration that advertises

products or services that are provided by a business on the subject property. Provided, however, during regular business hours, any vehicle or trailer that is necessary for the operation of the business on the subject property and which contains the advertising, may be parked in the public right of way adjacent to the subject property, or on the subject property. Provided further, however, if the vehicle or trailer is located on the subject property, it shall be parked within a standard marked or striped parking space and be licensed, insured and operable.

23.5 General Standards.

All signs hereafter constructed, erected, remodeled, relocated or expanded shall comply with the following standards:

1. Determination of Sign Area. The term "sign area" shall be the gross surface area with a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of a sign and in no case passing through or between any adjacent elements of same. Such perimeter shall not include any structural or framing elements lying outside the limits of such sign and not forming an integral part of the display. For computing the area of any wall sign which consists of letters mounted on a wall, the area shall be deemed to be the area of the smallest rectangular figure which can encompass all of the letters.
2. Traffic Safety. No sign shall be maintained at any location where by reason of its position, size, shape or color it may obstruct, impair, obscure, interfere with the view of or be confused with any traffic control sign, signal or device, or where it may interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.
3. Illumination.
 - a. Location/Design of Light Source. Whenever an external artificial light source is used to illuminate a sign, illumination shall be located, shielded, and directed so as not to be directly visible from any public street or residentially- zoned property at grade level. All artificial illumination shall be so designed, located, shielded, and directed as to illuminate only the sign face and to prevent the casting of glare or direct light upon adjacent property or streets.
 - b. Level of Illumination. In no event shall the illumination of any sign, resulting from any internal or external artificial light source, exceed 50 foot candles when measured with a standard light meter held perpendicular to the sign face a distance equal to the narrowest dimension of such sign face.
 - c. Signs adjacent to Residential Areas. Any illuminated sign located on a lot abutting or across the street from any residentially-zoned property shall not be illuminated between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.; except such

sign may remain illuminated during such time as the activity to which the sign pertains is engaged in the operation of business.

4. **Non-conforming Signs.** Signs existing at the time of enactment of this amendment and not conforming to the provisions herein, but which were constructed in compliance with previous regulations and ordinances, shall be regarded as non-conforming signs.
 - a. Non-conforming signs shall not be structurally enhanced or modified so as to prolong the life of the sign, or shall not be moved in whole or in part to another location, unless the sign is made to conform to the regulations of this Article.
 - b. Maintenance or replacement of parts designed to be changed which do not require any permit or the replacement of a sign face(s) shall not be considered an alteration of an existing non-conforming wall or ground sign requiring conformance with this Article; provided such change does not increase the surface area, height, or cause any other structural change.
 - c. Non-conforming ground and wall signs must be brought into conformance with this Article at the time of an application for site plan and architectural approval, or in the event of a change in use.
 - d. No sign permit will be issued for additional signs on property where an existing sign has been illegally installed.
 - e. Being of certain landmark value, the following signs shall be allowed to continue and be maintained and parts replaced in any manner to allow for continued use:
 - (1) The Wheaton Theatre, 123 North Hale Street, Wheaton, Illinois;
 - (2) Carlson's Glass, 312 West Front Street, Wheaton, Illinois;
 - (3) Wheaton Pharmacy, 208 South Hale Street, Wheaton, Illinois;
 - (4) Cock Robin, 201 West Wesley Street, Wheaton, Illinois.
5. **Maintenance.** The owner of a sign and the owner of the premises on which said sign is located shall be jointly and severally liable to maintain such sign or signs subject to the following standards:
 - a. Signs shall be maintained in a neat and orderly condition and good working order, including illumination sources, at all times.

- b. Signs shall be properly painted unless galvanized or otherwise treated to prevent rust or deterioration.
 - c. Signs shall conform to maintenance provisions of the Building and Electrical Codes as adopted by the City of Wheaton.
- 6. **Abandoned Signs.** Except as otherwise provided in this Code, any temporary sign installed for a period of thirty (30) days or more, or any sign which pertains to a time, event, or purpose which no longer applies, shall be deemed to have been abandoned and shall be removed.
- 7. **Removal of Signs.** Any sign found to be improperly maintained, abandoned or otherwise in violation of this Article which is not removed or repaired within thirty (30) days of written notice of the City Manager may be removed or repaired at the order of the City Manager. Any expense incidental to such removal or repair shall be charged to the owner of the property upon which the sign is located and shall constitute a lien upon the property.

23.6 Master Sign Plan.

- 1. **Master Sign Plan Required.** Any development of property over two (2) acres in size or a building consisting of more than three storefront tenants shall be required to submit a Master Sign Plan for review by the City Manager.
 - a. A scaled site plan marking the location of driveways, parking, landscaping and buildings noting all building dimensions and location of all signs.
 - b. Developments which are part of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) submittal must also include standards for consistency among all signs on site with regard to: color scheme, lettering or graphic style, lighting, location on site or building, material and sign proportions.
 - c. After approval of Master Sign Plan, no sign shall be installed except in conformance with Master Sign Plan. Individual sign permits may be filed at anytime but must be attached to and verified on approved Master Sign Plan. In case of conflict between provision of Master Sign Plan and other provisions of this Article, this Article shall control.

23.7 Permanent Signs.

1. Ground Signs. An establishment located on a single-use lot, an outbuilding or a unified center of less than two (2) acres in size shall be permitted to install one (1) ground sign of one of the following types and subject to the following regulations:

a. One (1) pole identification sign.

- (1) A pole sign (single or double faced) not exceeding a height of nineteen (19) feet above grade, which complies with the district sign setback, except that such sign may project beyond the minimum setback not more than twelve (12) inches. The area of such identification sign shall not exceed seventy-two (72) square feet on either side.
- (2) Any pole sign installed in a parking area must be surrounded with a concrete curb of at least six (6) inches in height which is designed to prevent damage to the sign from vehicular traffic.
- (3) Signs shall maintain a free clearance to grade of at least seven (7) feet.

b. One (1) monument identification sign

- (1) The monument sign, including the sign face, base and structure, shall not exceed seven feet (7') in height above ground level, and the total sign structure including the land berm, if provided there under, shall not exceed eleven feet (11') above the adjacent parking lot grade.
- (2) Each side of the monument sign face shall not exceed forty-eight (48) square feet.
- (3) The monument sign, excluding the sign face, shall be constructed with material generally similar to the material used for the exterior walls of the building identified thereon, which may or may not be masonry or stone, and shall have a maximum surface area equal to the allowable sign face size.

c. (1) Notwithstanding the regulations of this Article, all ground signs other than temporary signs and project identification signs located along the following rights-of-way must be monument signs:

Blanchard Road, south of Hawkins Circle;
Butterfield Road;
County Farm Road, north of Roosevelt Road and south of Manchester Road;
East Danada Loop Road;
Fapp Circle;

Main Street, north of Prairie Avenue and south of Geneva Road; Naperville Road, south of Longfellow Drive; Roosevelt Road, east of Sunnyside Avenue and west of Chase Street; Roosevelt Road, west of Hazelton Road; West Danada Loop Road

(2) Notwithstanding the regulations of this Article, all ground signs other than temporary signs and project identification signs must be monument signs and shall not exceed 24 square feet per sign face whenever a zoning lot meets all of the following criteria:

- a. Is located in the R-6, R-7, C-3, or O-R zoning district; and
- b. Is less than one acre in area; and
- c. Is contiguous to property in the R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, or R-5 district; and
- d. Abuts the right-of-way line of one or more of the following arterial streets:

Geneva Road
Roosevelt Road
Main Street (north of Roosevelt Road)
Naperville Road.

- d. Project Identification Signs. Developments over two (2) acres shall be permitted to install one (1) project identification sign at each entrance. Project identification sign shall not exceed nineteen (19) feet in height above grade and not exceed seventy-two (72) square feet on either side of the sign face. Signs shall be constructed of materials identical to the material used for exterior building walls.
- e. Ground signs must comply with the district sign setback identified in the following chart:

Zoning District	Sign Setback
R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, I-1, O-R	Special Use Permit Required
R-6, R-7	15 feet
C-1, C-3, C-5, M-1	10 feet
C-4, C-2	0 feet

	Side Yard Setback
Where adjacent to property in a residential zoning district	10 feet

f. Electronic Message Board Signs.

A Special Use Permit shall be required for all Electronic Message Board signs. Additionally, the following standards shall apply to all Electronic Message Board signs:

- (1) Electronic Message Board Signs shall be located only along the following rights-of-way:
 - Butterfield Road, east of West Loop Road and west of Leask Lane;
 - Butterfield Road, west of Wiesbrook Road;
 - Geneva Road east of West Street and west of Hallmark Court;
 - Geneva Road east of Gary Avenue and west of Farwell Street;
 - Main Street, north of Wakeman Avenue and south of Cole Street;
 - Naperville Road, north of Butterfield Road and south of Blanchard Street;
 - Roosevelt Road east of Chase Street;
 - Roosevelt Road, east of Shaffner Road and west of Fapp Circle.
- (2) Electronic Message Board Signs shall be allowed only for non-office commercial, government, school, park or church uses; and
- (3) The sign area of an Electronic Message Board Sign must be included as part of the total square footage of a permitted ground sign, and shall not exceed 50 percent of the total square footage of a permitted ground sign; and
- (4) Electronic Message Board messages shall be constant and not variable, with the message changes limited to no less than every 4 seconds; and
- (5) When an Electronic Message Board message changes, the prior message shall disappear simultaneously with the appearance of the new message; and
- (6) Electronic Message Board Signs shall not cause illumination in excess of 0.05 foot candles at any property line in or adjoining a residential use; and
- (7) Existing non-conforming Electronic Message Board signs must be brought into conformance with standards 4, 5 and 6 of this section no later than October 18, 2005; and

(8) Electronic Message Board Signs existing prior to October 18, 2005 and not in conformance with standards 1, 2, and 3 of this section shall not be subject to Article 23.5.4 of the City of Wheaton Zoning Ordinance.

2. Wall Signs. Wall sign shall be permitted subject to the following regulations:

- a. Any establishment may install a front wall sign or signs, the area of which shall not exceed one and one-half (1.5) square feet for every linear foot of wall frontage.
- b. Additional wall signs may be added on frontage where public access is provided. The total square feet of all wall signs may not exceed the allowable square footage for the front wall.
- c. Where more than one establishment occupies a building, each establishment will be allocated sign area based on amount of linear wall frontage it controls.
- d. Wall signs may not project more than twelve (12) inches beyond the wall surface.

3. Window Signs. Any permanent sign painted, goldleafed or attached onto the glass area or installed behind a window or in a showcase intended for viewing through the window from outside of the premises shall be subject to the following regulations

- a. Window signs shall be limited to no more than twenty-percent (20%) of the total window area and no more than 50% of the total window area in a door.
- b. The area of window signs must be included in total square footage of permitted wall signs.
- c. Window signs shall denote only the name and address of the business conducted on the premises and/or a product or products produced or sold or service rendered therein.
- d. Neon and/ or LED signs may be installed as window signs subject to these regulations.

4. Awning or Canopy Signs. Letters or logo may be painted or otherwise affixed to any permissible awning or canopy subject to the following regulations:

- a. Letters or logo shall not project above, below or beyond the physical dimensions of the awning or canopy,

- b. Letters or logo shall not be larger from top to bottom than 12 inches, provided, however, in the C-5 Zoning District letters or logos on awnings shall not exceed 1.5 square feet for every linear foot of wall frontage when such letters or logos are the only signage existing on the exterior of the establishment.
- c. Letters or logo shall denote only the name and address of the business conducted on the premises and/or a product or products produced or sold or service rendered therein.
- d. Awning or canopy signs shall maintain a free clearance to grade of at least seven (7) feet.

5. Hanging Signs. One (1) sign per business may be suspended below an awning or canopy subject to the following regulations:

- a. Horizontal dimension shall not exceed the depth of the awning or canopy.
- b. The vertical dimension shall not exceed twelve (12) inches.
- c. Hanging sign shall maintain a free clearance to grade of at least seven (7) feet.

6. Identification Signs by Building Type. The following building types in all zoning districts unless otherwise stated shall be subject to the following limitations:

	Wall	Ground
Multifamily Residential	1 per building – not to exceed 12 sq. feet, non-illuminated	1 per building – not to exceed 24 sq. feet
Office, Industrial	1 per entrance – not to exceed 12 sq. feet	Monument sign 1 per street – not to exceed 48 sq. feet or a pole sign directory not to exceed 14 feet in height or 32 sq. feet
Church, School or non-profit in Residentially Zoned District	1 per building – not to exceed 32 sq. feet	1 per street – not to exceed 32 sq. feet
Inn	1 per building – not to exceed 12 sq. feet externally illuminated	1 per street – not to exceed 12 sq. feet

23.8 Additional Requirements of the C-2 and C-4 Zoning Districts.

The purpose shall be to create an environment for downtown shopping and business recognizing the different needs of the downtown as it pertains to property values, traffic control, business climate, public interest, and historical value.

1. Additional Standards. In addition to the foregoing requirements recited in this Article, the following additional standards shall also apply to the C-2 and C-4 Zoning Districts.
 - a. Sign Color and Materials. The color and materials of any sign shall be compatible and harmonious with the color, materials and age of the building identified by the sign, according to the reasonable approval of the City Manager.
 - b. Internal Illumination. All internally-illuminated signs shall have opaque background with only letters and logo illuminated. All internally-illuminated signs shall be mounted flush to the surface of the wall.
 - c. Window Signs. All permanent and temporary signs shall be limited to a total of twenty percent (20%) of the total window area, except for grocery stores/drug stores and vacant stores.
 - d. Projecting Signs. One (1) non-illuminated sign projecting more than twelve (12) inches from a building shall be permitted subject to the following standards:
 - (1) The sign extends no more than four (4) feet from the building face.
 - (2) Sign face does not exceed twelve (12) square feet on either side and has an area of no more than twelve (12) square feet.
 - (3) Maintains a free clearance to grade of at least seven (7) feet.
 - e. Ground Signs. Ground signs shall not exceed a height of fourteen (14) feet above grade.
2. Placard Signs. Businesses in the C-2 and C-4 Zoning Districts may display one (1) placard signs provided that:
 - a. The sign portion of the placard is no larger than four (4) square feet and stands no higher than four (4) vertical feet.
 - b. Placard signs shall be placed inside the principal structure before the close of the business day.
 - c. Placard signs shall not be placed:
 - (1) Within fifteen (15) feet of any fire hydrant, emergency facility, intersecting driveway, alley or street;
 - (2) At any location where the width of paved area for the pedestrian passage is reduced to less than five (5) feet; or within five (5) feet of any marked crosswalk.

(3) On or within any parkway or median within any public right-of-way.

23.9 Temporary Signs.

No temporary sign shall be installed outdoors except under the following conditions:

1. Special Events Signs On-Site. Temporary signs, banners, and displays for special events sponsored by churches, schools, or other similar institutions are permitted but must be located on property owned or controlled by the church, school, or institution, and may be displayed only during a period commencing thirty (30) days prior to and ending three (3) days after the scheduled event.
2. Special Events Signs Off-Site. Temporary off-site signs advertising special events of community service organizations shall be permitted on property not controlled by the organization subject to the following regulations:
 - a. A community service organization is defined as an entity, no part of the income of which is distributable to its members, directors, or officers and whose principal purpose is to provide services, financial assistance, or personnel for the benefit of the residents of the City of Wheaton.
 - b. Signs for special events held within the City of Wheaton, sponsored by community service organizations, are permitted on private property other than public right-of-way, with the permission of the owner.
 - c. The total number of signs shall not exceed ten (10), with each limited to sixteen (16) square feet.
 - d. Each sign shall be securely affixed to the ground or maintained such that it cannot easily be removed.
 - e. The signs may be displayed only during a period commencing thirty (30) days prior to, and ending three (3) days after, the scheduled event.
 - f. There shall be not more than one (1) sign per lot, except that on a corner lot two (2) signs, one (1) facing each street, shall be permitted.
 - g. A permit shall be obtained from the City of Wheaton prior to display. Written permission from the owner or owners of the property on which the sign is displayed shall be submitted with the application for the permit.
 - h. The applicant for the permit shall pay a deposit of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100.00) to the City of Wheaton as a condition precedent to the issuance of the temporary sign permit. In the event all temporary signs are removed within the time period provided for in the permit, the deposit fee shall be refunded to the applicant. In the event all temporary signs are not removed within the time period provided for in the permit, the City of Wheaton shall remove the temporary signs; and the deposit fee shall be forfeited by the applicant.

3. Real Estate Signs. Where more than six (6) dwelling units (or lots for dwelling purposes), located in the same subdivision, are offered for sale or rental by the same party, or where more than 2,500 square feet of a commercial or industrial building or lot is offered for sale or rent, there shall be permitted one (1) non-illuminated sign facing each public street providing access to the property being offered. Each such sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and must be devoted solely to the sale or rental of the property being offered. Signs shall be removed when less than six (6) units or 2,500 square feet remain for sale or lease.
4. Construction Signs. In connection with the construction of six (6) or more dwelling units or the construction or remodeling of a building of two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet or more there shall be permitted one (1) non-illuminated sign not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet in area indicating the names of any or all of the owners and future occupants and of the architects, engineers, and contractors engaged in the construction; on corner lots two (2) signs, one facing each street, shall be permitted. Construction signs shall be removed at the time a permanent sign is installed or a certificate of occupancy is issued, whichever occurs first.
5. Banners. No banner or other fabric sign of any type may be installed except with a valid sign permit and in compliance with the following regulations:
 - a. All banners shall be constructed of heavy fabric with hemmed edges and metal grommets.
 - b. Horizontal banners of no more than thirty (30) feet long and no more than four (4) feet high shall be allowed on commercial structures provided that:
 - (1) No more than one banner shall be permitted at any given time and no more than one banner permit shall be issued within any consecutive six (6) month period to any single business.
 - (2) Banner is mounted abutting and flush to the building wall and secured at all four corners.
 - (3) Banner is removed thirty (30) days after the issuance of a sign permit.
 - c. Vertical banners, ornamental rather than informational nature, are permitted provided that:
 - (1) Banners shall be no larger than eight (8) feet long by three (3) feet wide and provide a minimum vertical clearance of nine (9) feet.
 - (2) Banners are secured by metal braces or frames running the width of the sign at the top and the bottom.
 - (3) Frames are secured to permanently mounted standards, such as a light pole.
 - (4) Banners carry no information on merchandise or price.
6. Placard Signs. Businesses in C-1Commercial district may display one (1) placard sign provided that:

- a. The sign portion of the placard is no larger than four (4) square feet and stands no higher than four (4) vertical feet.
- b. Placard signs shall be placed inside the principal structure before the close of the business day.
- c. Placard signs shall not be placed:
 - (1) Within fifteen (15) feet of any fire hydrant, emergency facility, intersecting driveway, alley or street;
 - (2) At any location where the width of paved area for the pedestrian passage is reduced to less than five (5) feet; or within five (5) feet of any marked crosswalk.
 - (3) On or within any parkway or median within any public right-of-way.