

APPENDIX A

Photographic Inventory: Compliant and Non-Compliant Signs in Dedham

Update to the Town of Dedham Sign Code
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Photos taken by Steven Cecil May 2020

As part of the evaluation of existing signage conditions, the planning team undertook an inventory of existing signs that are within the jurisdiction and regulations of the Dedham Sign Code (Chapter 237 Signs). The inventory included tours of all significant commercial areas and concentrations within the Town, and the photography of the majority of exterior and window sign conditions in those districts. The inventory also and selected signage examples for institutions and more isolated enterprises outside of the commercial areas. The intent was to:

- Locate and observe examples of all allowed sign types
- Seek examples of non-compliant signs, without regard to whether they have received waiver approval or are eligible for retention as “grandfathered” under the provisions of the Code. This includes some signs types or conditions that, although listed in the Code as “prohibited” or otherwise restricted, may be allowed through action by the ZBA or Board of Selectmen. Their inclusion in this summary does not indicate that they have not been permitted through a waiver or through the approval of the Board of Selectmen, which can occur for certain temporary signs. The non-compliant signs have been documented without a judgement regarding their potential appropriateness or value for the occupant, or its relative merits or detriments that might be considered should approval be required and sought.

The inventory is organized alphabetically by allowed and disallowed sign types as identified in the Code. Signs that are consistent or inconsistent with the intent of the applicable design guidelines are grouped at the end of this inventory. For signs that are limited in size, the area estimated by scaling from photographs rather than field measurements.

Sign Inventory

A sign may have multiple attributes which are regulated within the Code. For example, a “wall sign” is a type of sign might be composed of “applied lettering”, and be “internally illuminated”. The sign inventory is organized to provide examples of all of the sign types and attributes that are addressed in the code and not specifically exempted. In most cases, they are included in the Definitions (Section 237-4). In other cases, the signs are described in the text, tables or notes.

Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Applied Lettering

Description

- Individual applied letters applied to a wall without a distinct background

Regulated Characteristics

- Individual applied letters applied to a wall without a distinct background
- Outside dimension of all lettering included within the sign area calculations, rather than the area of individual letters

Figure 1: Applied Lettering



Figure 2: Applied Lettering



Awning and Awning Sign

Description

- Cloth awning or canopy projecting from a building

Regulated Characteristics

- Must not obscure architectural sign band of the building
- Must conform with certain fabric and color specifications or equal
- Awnings with larger lettering must have an approved waiver.
- Awning signs may not be applied to bottom or sides, or exceed 25% of the total awning area.
- May not be back lit or internally illuminated
- Must be completely opaque

Figure 4: Awning and Sign



Figure 3: Awning and Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Back-Lighted Sign

Description

- Illumination is directed to the surface on which the sign (or individual lettering) is attached.

Regulated Characteristics

- Must be white, steady, non-neon source

Figure 5: Backlighting Sign



Banner Signs

Description

- Banner with commercial message
- Banners with community/cultural messages

Regulated Characteristics

- In right-of way, commercial messages must be specifically approved by the Board of Selectmen.
- Community/cultural messages on public or private land must be approved by Board of Selectmen, permitted by Building Commissioner, and are not reviewed by DRAB.
- All banner signs are limited to 30 days.

Figure 6: Cultural Banner



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Building Marker

Description

- Name, date of construction and similar information about a building

Regulated Characteristics

- Size is not regulated

Figure 7: Building Marker



Figure 8: Building Marker



Building Sign

Description

- Any sign attached to any exterior part of a building.
- Wall signs, projecting signs, and suspended signs are specifically addressed in the Code.
- This category includes all other attached exterior signs

Regulated Characteristics

- All building signs except for Building Markers and Identification Signs are included in calculations of allowable sign areas.

Figure 9: Building Sign



Figure 10: Building Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Business Identification Sign

Description

- Broadly defined as any sign drawing attention to a building, development, business, product, activity, service sold, offered, or provided on a lot.

Regulated Characteristics

- Not specifically regulated as a sign type, but presumably used to distinguish signs that have other purposes. If not specifically interpreted as a Business Identification signs, other signs would presumably be allowed on a building or lot under Section 237-3 B. (2) unless specifically regulated.

Figure 12: Business ID Sign



Figure 11: Business ID Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Center Identification Sign

Description

- Sign identifying a planned complex

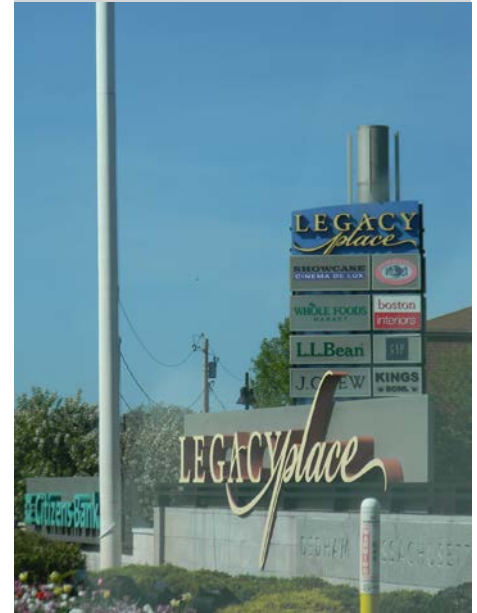
Regulated Characteristics

- Not specifically regulated as a sign type, but presumably used to distinguish signs that have other purposes. Such signs would presumably be allowed as business signs under Section 237-3 (B.1) and regulated under other sign types.

Figure 13: Center Identification Sign



Figure 14: Center Identification Sign



Changeable Copy Sign

Description

- Sign where messages change a maximum of 8 times a day.

Regulated Characteristics

- Signs with time or temperature are not considered in this category, but are part of other sign types.

Figure 15: Changeable Copy Sign



Figure 16: Changeable Copy Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Digital Display Sign

Description

- Sign using a digital display with changeable graphics and streaming video.
- Effective viewing at close range

Regulated Characteristics

- Allowed only in Planned Commercial Developments, provided message on same is not legible from a public way. This sign is not considered an animated or flashing sign.

Figure 17: Digital Display Sign



Directory Sign

Description

- Sign on or near entrance to building or lot indicating list of tenants

Regulated Characteristics

- Presumably calculated as part of total allowable sign area and other characteristics of the specific sign type used.

Figure 18: Directory Sign



Figure 19: Directory Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Externally Illuminated Sign

Description

- Sign where the light source is outside of the sign panel.
- Includes signs in windows intended to be visible from the exterior.

Regulated Characteristics

- Must be white, steady, stationary non-neon light shielded and directed at the sign.

Figure 20: Externally Illuminated Sign



Figure 21: Externally Illuminated Signs



Flag

Description

- Fabric mounted on a pole or suspended from a building with symbols of government, corporate, or other entities

Regulated Characteristics

- Permitted in all zones

Figure 22: Flag



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Freestanding Sign

Description

- Sign with supports independent of a building

Regulated Characteristics

- For residential project, may only list name of owner or occupant, street number, and permitted uses or occupations.
- Sign area, and landscaping, curbing, and setbacks are regulated, with some variations by zone.
- Only one sign of this type is permitted per lot in all districts.

Figure 23: Freestanding



Figure 24: Freestanding



Figure 25: Freestanding



Identification Sign

Description

- Provides name and address of occupant

Regulated Characteristics

- One sign only permitted
- Must not exceed 4 square feet

Figure 26: Identification Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Incidental Sign

Description

- Provides directions to vehicles and pedestrians within a lot

Regulated Characteristics

- Allowed in all districts except Residential.
- May not have a commercial message visible off site.

Figure 27: Incidental Sign



Figure 29: Incidental Sign

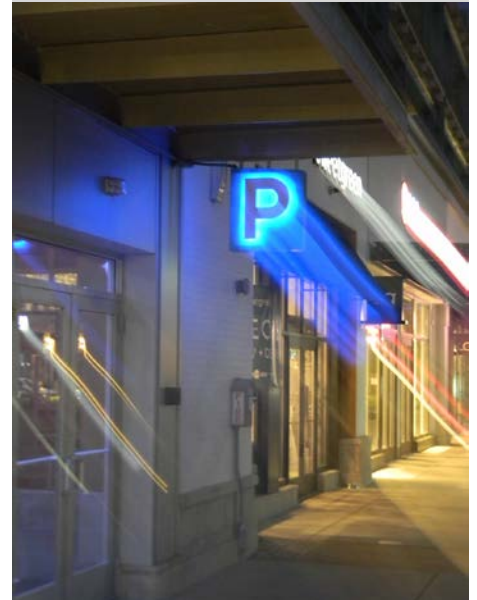


Figure 28: Incidental Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Internally Illuminated Sign

Description

- Sign where the light source is concealed within a translucent panel.

Regulated Characteristics

- Must be white, steady, stationary non-neon light directed at the translucent panel.
- No more than four colors shall be used. Black and white shall not be considered colors.

Figure 30: Internally Illuminated Signs



Figure 31: Internally Illuminated Signs



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

LED Illuminated Sign

Description

- Sign illuminated with a light emitting diode.

Regulated Characteristics

- Not considered acceptable illumination except in regards to Changeable Message Signs and Digital Display Signs (Section 237-18).

Figure 32: LED Sign



Figure 34: LED Sign



Figure 33: LED Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Marquee Sign

Description

- Sign on a permanent, roof-like extension of a building to provide weather protection

Regulated Characteristics

- Marquee signs are limited to Central Business, Limited Manufacturing, and Highway Business Zones

Figure 35: Marquee Sign



Monument Sign

Description

- Detached sign on a site with a base with a width at least 50% of the sign width

Regulated Characteristics

- Top of base less than 3 feet above finish grade.
- Base not required if base of a solid or enclosed sign is within one foot of grade.

Figure 36: Monument



Figure 37: Monument



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Mural

Description

- This is not a defined type within the Code; wall murals in Dedham occur in few places. In one instance, the images draw on neighborhood characteristics and was considered by members of the community as public art.
- In another instance, an event in local history is depicted outside of a tavern that uses the event as its name. This is only indirectly a “business sign”

Figure 38: Mural



Figure 39: Mural



Regulated Characteristics

- Regulatory status is not clear.

Non-commercial Signs

Description

- Signs that would not qualify as a business sign

Regulated Characteristics

- Permitted in any location
- Must be less than 9 square feet in area
- Must not be illuminated

Figure 40: Non Commercial Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Non-conforming Sign, Pre-existing

Description

- Sign in place before regulations were instituted, or a sign that was installed in conformance with previously existing standards at the time of installation

Regulated Characteristics

- Permitted if it meets the descriptive criteria.
- May be replaced with a new sign with 70% of the original sign area and located within current setback requirements.

Off-premises Sign

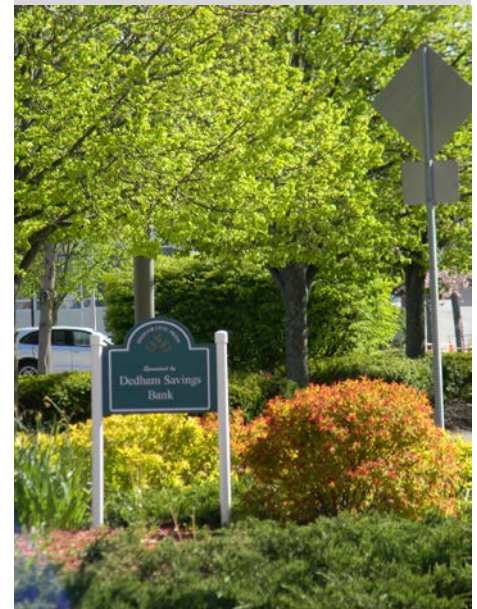
Description

- A sign communicating products, accommodations, services or activities not located on the premises

Regulated Characteristics

- Are prohibited except for approved banners

Figure 41: Off Premise Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Pole or Pylon Sign

Description

- Freestanding sign with a pole or pylon support, not attached to a building
- Bottom of sign must be at least 3 feet above grade

Regulated Characteristics

- Pylon, pole or support structure must not be illuminated
- Allowed in all districts except Residential and Local Business

Figure 42: Pylon



Figure 44: Pylon



Figure 43: Pylon



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Projecting Sign

Description

- A projecting or blade sign, attached to a wall and extending at least 12 inches from the face.

Regulated Characteristics

- Regulated within the overall area calculations
- Permitted over public right-of-way if consistent with other standards
- Must be at least 8 feet above ground level
- Sign top must be no higher than the lower of 25 feet or the second window door frame.

Figure 45: Projecting Sign



Figure 47: Projecting Sign



Figure 46: Projecting Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Real Estate Sales Open House Sign

Description

- Advertises sale or lease of premises

Regulated Characteristics

- One sale or lease sign permitted only and may not obscure traffic sight lines
- Open house signs may be added on day of open house only and cannot block sidewalks.

Residential Sign

Description

- Sign for residential uses that has no commercial message except for goods and services provided on premises

Regulated Characteristics

- Provision of goods and services must comply with applicable Zoning and Town regulations.

Figure 48: Residential



Figure 49: Residential



Sandwich Board Sign

Description

- Non-illuminated freestanding sign on an A- or T-frame support, advertising goods and services at a premise.

Regulated Characteristics

- Restricted to Districts LB, GB and CB, with sign permit

Figure 50: Sandwich Board



Figure 51: Sandwich Board



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

SC District Signs

Description

- Illuminated or non-illuminated signs in a Senior Community District, such as NewBridge on the Charles, visible from outside of the district

Figure 52: SC District Sign



Regulated Characteristics

- May be no greater than 15 square feet in areabe added on day of open house only and cannot block sidewalks.

Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Sign Package

Description

- Coordinated sign program for all business signs for properties with multiple buildings and/or tenants

Regulated Characteristics

- Regulated factors must include drawings, material, color specifications, number of signs and locations.
- Must be recommended by DRAB

Figure 53: Sign Package



Figure 56: Sign Package



Figure 54: Sign Package



Figure 57: Sign Package



Figure 55: Sign Package



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Suspended Sign

Description

- Sign suspended downwards from a building support or other horizontal plane surface.

Regulated Characteristics

- Regulated in accordance with other business signs regarding allowable area, materials and illumination.
- Allowable height above sidewalk does not appear to be regulated.

Figure 58: Suspended Sign



Temporary Sign

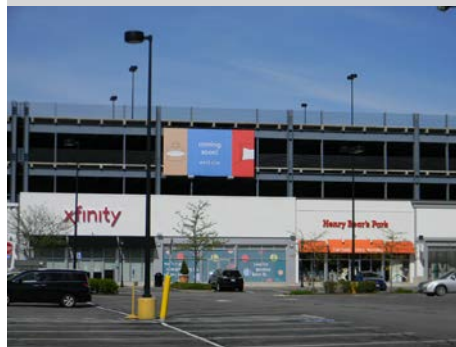
Description

- Any sign not permanently mounted, except for window signs, that is not in place more than 30 days

Regulated Characteristics

- Temporary signs are permitted on Town property subject to coordination with the Town, and in place no more than 30 days before event.
- Maximum area of 9 square feet per coordinated location.

Figure 59: Temporary Sign



- Signs for temporary events and sales on residential properties if less than 9 square feet

Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Wall Sign

Description

- A sign that is parallel to and attached, painted or applied to a wall and has only one side

Regulated Characteristics

- Regulated in accordance with other business signs regarding allowable area, materials and illumination. The number of signs is not regulated, except as may be identified in an approved Signage Package
- If a building has an architectural sign band, a wall sign must be within the band.
- Sign top must be no higher than the lower of: 25 feet; or the second window door frame; or the lowest point of the roof.

Figure 61: Wall Sign



Figure 64: Wall Sign



Figure 62: Wall Sign



Figure 65: Wall Sign



Figure 63: Wall Sign



Figure 66: Wall Sign



Figure 60: Wall Sign



Examples of Compliant Signs that are Allowed and Regulated

Window Sign

Description

- Any sign applied to the pane or placed close to the window inside a premise to be viewed and communicate information about the activity, business, commodity, event, sale or surface

Regulated Characteristics

- Regulated in accordance with other business signs regarding allowable area, materials and illumination. than the lower of: 25 feet; or the second window door frame; or the lowest point of the roof.

Figure 67: Window Sign



Figure 68: Window Sign



Figure 69: Window Sign



Figure 70: Window Sign



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Animated or Flashing Sign

Description

- Any sign using movement of change of lighting to depict action or create a special effect or scene

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- Only one sign was observed that might be classified as “flashing”- a small LED window sign alternating between messages.

Figure 71: Animated Sign



Figure 72: Animated Sign



Banners

Description

- Any sign of lightweight fabric mounted to a building or pole along at least one edge.

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited except for certain temporary signs, which include business signs, community and cultural signs as provided in the Code.

Figure 73: Banner



Figure 74: Banner



Observation

- There are many examples of signs which appear to be integral business signs rather than temporary window signs

Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Beacon

Description

- Directed light off-premises, or any light with a beam that rotates or moves.

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- No examples were found

Billboard

Description

- Freestanding off-premise sign larger than 100 square feet in panel area, or a sign affixed to a building covering greater than 20% of the wall area.

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- Two examples of large billboards are located along Route 128; their status relative to state and local approval processes has not been confirmed. Also observed was the use of large banners attached to a building wall facing Route 128.

Figure 75: Billboard



Figure 76: Billboard



Figure 77: Billboard



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Business Signs

Description

- There are many types of regulated business signs, including wall signs, projecting signs, suspended signs, and window signs

Regulated Characteristics

- Various characteristics of these signs are regulated, giving rise to inconsistencies in terms of allowable area, setbacks, location, number of signs, illumination, and other factors as noted for each of the examples.
- Inconsistency with the Code does not entail that a sign may not have been properly permitted, either through the ZBA waiver process, “grandfathering” provisions, or other method. This status has not been researched for the cases illustrated. However, the inconsistencies indicate that the current Code does not provide for these examples.

of wall area, or height as regulated in the districts in which they were observed. These photos provide a selection of examples. This is notably the case for pylon signs along the Route 1 corridor and within sight of Route 128. Window signs sometimes fill a greater proportion of window area than allowed under the regulations. Wall signs appear to exceed the allowable proportion of wall area, in other cases. Additional off-premise freestanding business signs were noted to indicate secondary or routes to access an entity.

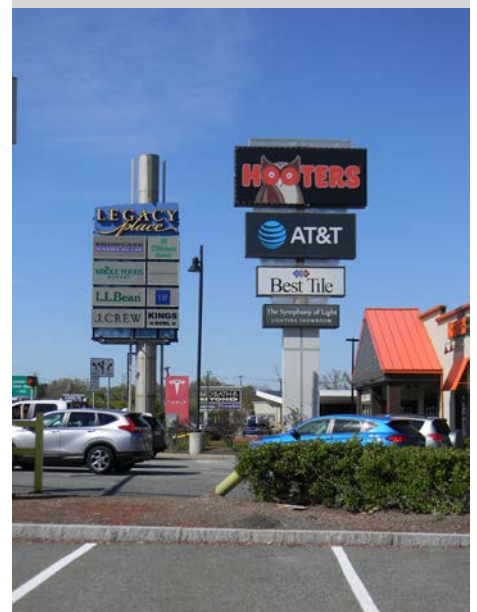
Observation

- There are many instances of business signs that do not appear to meet standards for size, percent

Figure 78: Business



Figure 79: Business



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Figure 80: Business



Figure 83: Business



Figure 86: Business



Figure 81: Business



Figure 84: Business

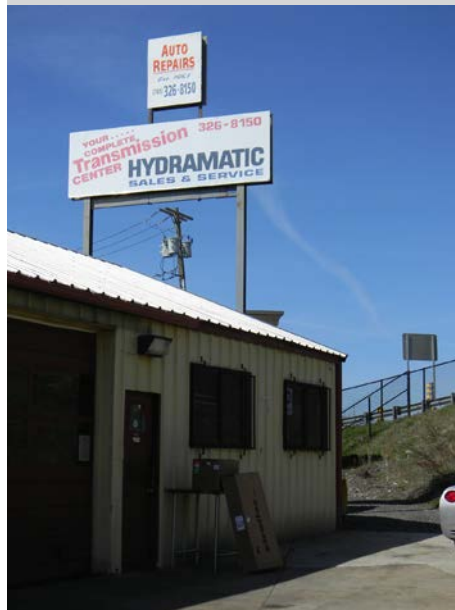


Figure 87: Business



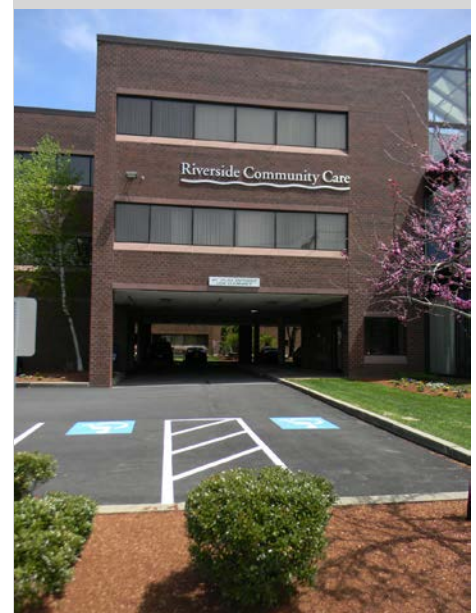
Figure 82: Business



Figure 85: Business



Figure 88: Business



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Commercial Signs Attached to Fences or Rocks

Description

- Business sign attached to fences or rocks

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- Signs on fences were observed in a few locations, and no signs on rocks were noted.

Figure 89: Fence



Figure 90: Sign on Fence



LED Illuminated Sign

Description

- Sign illuminated with a light emitting diode

Regulated Characteristics

- Not considered acceptable illumination except in regards to Changeable Message Signs and Digital Display Signs (Section 237-18).

Figure 91: LED Illuminated



Observation

- There are many instances of window signs that use LED illumination, including prevalent "Open" signs that are relatively small in scale relative to the windows in which they are located.

Figure 92: LED Illuminated



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Neon Sign

Description

- Sign made of glass tubing and charged inert gas

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- Small neon signs are used in multiple establishments to indicate whether they are open or to convey a message

Figure 93: Neon



Figure 95: Neon



Figure 96: Neon



Figure 94: Neon



Figure 97: Neon



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Pennant

Description

- Lightweight fabric sign suspended from a rope, wire, or string

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- No pennants were observed

Portable Sign

Description

- Non-permanent sign meant to be moved including on vehicles not used in the day-to-day operations of a business.

Regulated Characteristics

- Not permitted, except for sandwich boards in specific districts

Observation

- Non-compliant signs of this type were not observed.

Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Roof Sign

Description

- A sign located above, or projected above, the lowest point of the eaves or the top of the parapet wall of any building, or which is painted on or fastened to the roof.

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- There a small number of signs that do not comply with the regulations. However, there are cases where the design of the facade and signage location require challenging interpretations because of building configuration and

Figure 98: Roof Sign



Figure 100: Roof Sign



Figure 101: Roof Sign



Figure 99: Roof Sign



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Sign which Obscures or Tends to Block Clear View of Traffic

Description

- Signs which obscure or tend to block a clear view of traffic, including temporary real estate signs

Figure 102: Temporary Sign Blocking Sight Lines



Regulated Characteristics

- Obscuration as determined by the Town

Observation

- Real estate signs have a tendency to be placed near corners, in some cases.

Temporary Lease or Sale Signs

Description

- A sign indicating real estate or space for sale or lease

Regulated Characteristics

- The number and size of such signs is regulated, with a maximum area of 9 square feet.

Figure 103: Lease Sign Area



Figure 104: Lease Sign Area



Observation

- Signs that may exceed the maximum permitted size were observed

Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Temporary Signs

Description

- A sign with a business message that is temporary in nature.

Regulated Characteristics

- Except for temporary window signs, such signs are restricted unless specifically approved by the Town.

Observation

- Temporary signs and additional wall and freestanding signs that are not covered in the base regulations and seem unlikely to have been approved by the Town occur in many locations.

Figure 105: Temporary



Figure 106: Temporary



Examples of Non-Compliant and Prohibited Signs

Wind-driven, Whirling, Turning, or Spinning Signs

Description

- Activated, motion induced signs using wind or other energy source

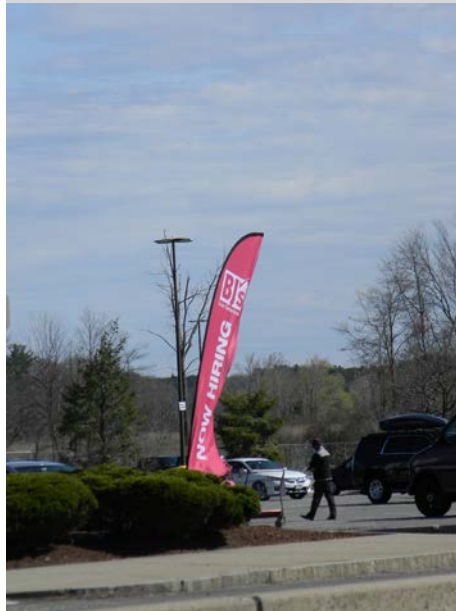
Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Observation

- There are several instances of banners that are attached to flexible poles designed to flutter in the wind, which are commercially called “swooper” or “feather” signs, among other names.

Figure 107: Wind Driven Banner



Wall sign above 25'

Description

- A sign mounted on a wall above 25'.

Regulated Characteristics

- Prohibited

Figure 108: Wind Driven Banner

