

SIGN CODE IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES AND POTENTIAL RESOLUTIONS



ISSUE #1: Sign Definition

The current definition is ambiguous and only clearly highlights commercial uses of signage in the definition. The Council's past direction and past application of the Code has been for the sign regulations to apply to all uses including, but not limited to, the full range of personal expressive speech, such as political, religious, directional, or other signage. Text in **red** is proposed for addition (underlined) or deletion (struck-through).

17.80.030 Definitions

~~40. "Sign" means:~~

~~a. Any visual communication device, structure, or fixture which is visible from any public right-of-way or waterway placed for the promotion of products, goods, services, events or to identify a building, using sign graphics or trademarks; or~~

~~b. Steel, plastic or similar panels displaying corporate colors, logos or trademarks and as are common on corporate signature buildings to give identity to the business (corporate colors which conform to the city's design manual requirements for color shall be excluded from this definition of a sign); or~~

~~c. Inflatable figures, balloons (in a display of six or more), festoons, streamers, spinners, product representations and advertisements for services which are attached to a fixed object or stationary vehicle.~~

40. "Sign" means any device, structure, fixture, placard, surface, awning, banner, balloon or thing using graphics, lights, symbols and/or written copy designed, used or displayed for the purpose of advertising, informing, identifying, attracting attention to, or promoting the interest of any person, institution, business, event, product, goods or services; provided, that the same is visible from a street, way, sidewalk, or parking area open to the public. Excluded are official traffic signs or signals, public notices, and governmental flags.

ISSUE #2: Location of Temporary Sign Areas

The definitions of temporary sign areas (GHMC 17.80.030.27 and 34) only reference public right-of-way (ROW) as where they apply. However, the temporary sign regulations (GHMC 17.80.110. A and B) reference these sign areas and include regulations on private property as well. This is how the regulations have been historically read (both ROW and private property), thus the language is proposed to be amended to reflect that intent. Text in **red** is proposed for addition (underlined) or deletion (struck-through).

17.80.030 Definitions

27. **"Nonresidential temporary sign area"** means the area within the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to or all private property within the public institutional (PI), downtown business (DB), neighborhood commercial (B-1), general business (B-2), commercial (C-1), residential and business 1 and 2 (RB-1 and RB-2), planned community development commercial (PCD-C), employment (ED), waterfront commercial (WC), waterfront Millville (WM), planned community business park (PCD-BP), and the planned community development neighborhood business (PCD-NB) zoning districts.

34. **"Residential temporary sign area"** means the area within the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to or all private property within the single-family residential (R-1), planned community development low density residential (RLD), medium density residential (R-2), planned community development medium density residential (RMD), multiple-family residential (R-3), and waterfront residential (WR) zoning districts.

17.80.110 Temporary signs

A. Temporary Signs in Public Right-of-Way.

1. Location. Temporary signs are prohibited from being placed within: roundabouts; medians; shoulders; travel lanes; and areas of the public right-of-way that are not accessible by a sidewalk or pedestrian walking path. Signs shall be no further away than 100 feet from the intersection. Placement of temporary signs shall only be permitted in areas identified on the director's official map for temporary signs in the right-of-way as updated and maintained by the director. Temporary signs shall not be located in rights-of-way adjacent to city facilities or parks, or any other government-owned facilities and properties.

a. In addition to the standards above, temporary signs in the area on Harborview Drive from Soundview Drive to Rosedale Street, and on North Harborview Drive from Finholm Market to Peacock Hill Drive, are authorized to exceed the 100 feet from the intersection requirement, and these temporary signs shall obtain an encroachment permit in addition to the permit required in subsection (A)(3) of this section.

2. Safety. All temporary signs shall be placed in a manner that is safe for all users of the public right-of-way. Temporary signs shall not block access to structures, parked cars, block vehicular sight distance views at corners, intersections, or block pedestrian walking paths. No temporary sign shall mimic, or be attached to, official roadway signage (stop signs, yield, etc.).
3. Permitting. All temporary signs shall have an approved city permit attached to the sign face. Permits can be acquired online at the city of Gig Harbor website, or in person at the Civic Center at no cost. Permits are valid for 30 days at a time. All signs with expired permits or no permit attached will be removed.
4. Temporary signs in a residential temporary sign area are limited in size to four square feet per side, no more than eight square feet total and shall not exceed three feet in height from the ground when displayed consistent with 17.80.110.A.1.
5. Temporary signs in a nonresidential temporary sign area are limited in size to six square feet per side, no more than 12 square feet total and shall not exceed three feet in height from the ground when displayed consistent with 17.80.110.A.1.
6. No sign shall obstruct or impair access to a public sidewalk, public or private street or driveway, traffic control sign, bus stop, fire hydrant, bench, or any type of street furniture, or otherwise create a hazard, including a tripping hazard.
7. Temporary signs shall only be placed in the right-of-way if the sign owner has permission from the underlying property owner. Owners may remove signs without notice.
8. All signs placed or erected that do not meet the regulations will be removed without notice.

B. Temporary Signs on Private Property.

1. All signs placed on private property shall have owner's consent. Owners may remove signs without notice.
2. Temporary signs on private property do not require a permit.
3. Temporary signs in a **residential temporary sign area** shall not exceed six feet in height from the ground when displayed and shall be limited as follows:
 - a. For nonresidential uses, no more than one sign visible from the public right-of-way per tenant space is allowed. The sign is limited in size to six square feet per side, no more than 12 square feet in total.
 - b. For residential uses, no more than four signs visible from the public right-of-way per lot are allowed. The total size of all signs combined is limited to six square feet; in the case of double-sided signs, 12 square feet is allowed.

4. Temporary signs in a **nonresidential temporary sign area** shall not exceed three feet in height from the ground when displayed and shall be limited as follows:

a. For nonresidential uses, no more than one sign visible from the public right-of-way per tenant space is allowed. The sign is limited in size to six square feet per side, no more than 12 square feet in total. One temporary banner attached to the exterior of the business for which it applies is additionally allowed and shall be limited to 20 square feet in size. The banner may be displayed for a total of no more than 60 cumulative days per calendar year.

b. For residential uses, no more than four signs visible from the public right-of-way per lot are allowed. The total size of all signs combined is limited to six square feet; in the case of double-sided signs, 12 square feet is allowed.