

ORDINANCE NO. _____, SERIES 2026

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LOUISVILLE METRO LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REGARDING DIGITAL DISPLAY OFF-PREMISES SIGNS (BILLBOARDS) (CASE NO. 25-LDC-0006)

SPONSORED BY: COUNCIL MEMBERS PIAGENTINI AND HERNDON

WHEREAS, the Legislative Council of the Louisville/Jefferson Metro Government (“Council”) adopted Resolution No. 30, Series 2025 directing Office of Planning staff to review the Land Development Code (“LDC”) and develop recommendations relating to digital display off-premises signs (billboards), which are also referred to as changing image or electronic off-premises signs; and

WHEREAS, Office of Planning staff developed those recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Committee to the Planning Commission met on December 15, 2025, to discuss and review the proposed changes, and recommended the changes to be considered by the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on those amendments on both February 19, 2026 and April 2, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered the record and testimony relative to those amendments and recommended the approval of such amendments, to Council; and

WHEREAS, Council approves and accepts the recommendation of the Planning Commission as set forth in the minutes of the Planning Commission in Case No. 25-LDC-0006.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO GOVERNMENT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I: Chapter 1 of the LDC, Section 1.2.2 – Definitions is hereby amended

to add and to amend the following definitions:

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Abandonment, Off-Premises Sign – An off-premises sign is deemed abandoned if for a period of one (1) year or more, the sign has: (a) Not displayed advertising; (b) Displayed obsolete advertising; or (c) Needed substantial repairs due to lack of maintenance.

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Billboard – ~~Billboard~~ – (See off-premises sign definition.) See “Off-Premises Sign.”

....

Changeable copy sign/Reader board - A sign or portion thereof with characters, letters, or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or the surface of the sign. ~~These signs do not include signs considered as changing image signs. As used in this Land Development Code, this term does not include~~ changing image signs or digital display off-premises signs.

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Off-Premises Sign (also referred to as an outdoor advertising sign ~~or~~ and commonly known as a billboard): ~~A sign that is considered a principal use on a lot by this Land Development Code and is unassociated with other principal uses on the lot upon which the sign is located. Such a sign typically provides a commercial message, directing attention to a business commodity, service, or establishment conducted, sold, or offered at a location other than the premises on which the sign is erected.~~

<u>NOTE:</u> Regulations moved to Chapter 4 Part 3.
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Off-Premises Sign, Digital Display - A type of off-premises sign, with a sign face, or portion thereof, which electronically changes a fixed display screen composed of a series of lights, including light emitting diodes (LED's), fiber optics, or other similar new technology where the message change sequence is accomplished immediately. Digital display off-premises signs include computer programmable, microprocessor controlled electronic or digital displays that display electronic, static images, static graphics, or static pictures, with or without textual information. As used in this Land Development Code, this term does not include changing image signs that are permitted as on-premises signs.

Off-Premises Sign, Static - A type of off-premises sign, generally, but not limited to, a rigidly assembled sign, display, or device, that is free-standing and affixed to the ground, the primary purpose of which is to display advertising messages or information that can be changed manually in the field. Such signs are generally designed so that the copy or poster on the sign can be changed frequently and the advertising space is for lease.

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Outdoor Advertising Sign – See “Off-Premises Sign.”

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Parkway, Designated – Any roadway designated as a parkway or scenic corridor pursuant to Chapter 10, Part 3 of this Land Development Code.

....

Shared On-Premises Sign – A permanent on-premises sign used by two or more principal uses in separate premises, which utilize common off-street parking and/or shared access. As used in this Land Development Code, a shared on-premises sign is not considered an ~~off-premises/outdoor advertising sign~~ by these regulations.

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SECTION II: Chapter 1 of the LDC, Section 1.3.5, is hereby amended as follows:

1.3.5 Signs (August 2010)

Any sign legally in existence on the effective date of any zoning regulation that does not permit such signs may continue in existence as a matter of right. Such nonconforming sign may be maintained and repaired on the same property so long as the size, including the area and height, is not increased beyond the existing size. A nonconforming sign cannot be altered in any way so as to make it less in compliance with existing regulations, such as by adding moving parts or illumination. See chapter 8 of ~~the~~ this Land Development Code for additional provisions related to nonconforming on-premises signs and chapter 4 of this Land Development Code for additional provisions related to off-premises signs.

SECTION III: Chapter 2 of the LDC, Part 6 – Special Purpose Zoning Districts, is hereby amended as follows:

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2.6.4 W-1 Waterfront District

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B. Prohibited Uses:

All uses other than those listed as permitted or similar to those permitted are prohibited. Specifically prohibited are adult entertainment uses and ~~advertising signs/billboards (off-premises advertising) signs.~~

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2.6.5 W-2 Waterfront District

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B. Prohibited Uses:

All uses other than those listed as permitted or similar to those permitted are prohibited. Specifically prohibited are adult entertainment uses and ~~advertising signs/billboards (off-premises advertising)~~signs.

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2.6.6 W-3 Waterfront District

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B. Prohibited Uses:

All uses other than those listed as permitted or similar to those permitted are prohibited. Specifically prohibited are adult entertainment uses and ~~advertising signs/billboards (off-premises advertising)~~signs.

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SECTION IV: Chapter 2 of the LDC, Part 7 – Planned Village Development, is hereby amended as follows:

2.7.1 Planned Village Development (PVD) District

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Table 2.7.1

	Village Edge	Village General	Village Center
.....			
OTHER			
.....			
outdoor advertising off-premises sign	X	X	X
.....			

.....

8. Signs.

Signs shall be consistent and compatible with the village pattern as defined in C.2. of this Section. In order to allow maximum flexibility, sign restrictions contained in Chapter 8 shall not apply within a village. Instead, sign standards shall be provided by the applicant and approved by the Planning Commission at the time of approval of the Master Plan. ~~Outdoor advertising~~Off-premises signs shall not be permitted within the PVD District.

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2.7.5 Traditional Neighborhood Zoning District – Old Louisville/Limerick

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E. Signs.

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1. ~~Outdoor Advertising~~Off-premises signs (off-premises signs), as defined in the Land Development Code, are not permitted within the TNZD.

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SECTION V: Chapter 4 of the LDC, Part 3 – Permitted Uses with Special

Standards, is hereby amended as follows:

Chapter 4 Part 3 Permitted Uses with Special Standards

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4.3.12 Off-Premises SignageSigns (also referred to as Billboards and Outdoor Advertising Signs)

The design criteria below are the only design standards within the Land Development Code that apply to off-premises signage.

A. ~~Unilluminated Outdoor Advertising Signs~~Static Off-Premises Sign (Less than 72 square feet) - An ~~unilluminated outdoor advertising sign of in which the area of the sign is~~ less than seventy-two (72) square feet shall be allowed if:

1. Located in a C-N, C-1, C-2, C-M, EZ-1, PRO, PEC, M-1, M-2 or M-3 District;
2. Set back at least ~~fifteen (15)~~ feet from the front and/or street-side property lines if in a C-N, C-1, C-2 or C-M Districts;

NOTE: Outdoor advertising signs are prohibited in the city of Middletown

3. Located not less than ~~four hundred fifty (450)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the same side of the same street; and not less than ~~nine hundred (900)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the same side of a ~~controlled access highway~~expressway or designated parkway*;

NOTE: *"Designated parkways" as referenced in the section of Chapter 10 Part 3.
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4. Located not less than ~~two hundred twenty five (225)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the opposite side of the same street (measured from the point of intersection on the same side of the street with the line from the existing sign perpendicular to the roadway); and not less than ~~four hundred fifty (450)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the opposite side of the same ~~controlled access highway~~expressway or designated parkway (as so measured);

5. Located not less than ~~seventy-five (75)~~ feet from the centerline of an intersecting roadway;
6. In a C-N District, located not less than ~~two hundred (200)~~ feet measured radially from the nearest edge of a residentially zoned or residentially developed lot in the *metropolitan area*;
7. In in a C-1, C-2, C-M, EZ-1, PRO, PEC, M-1, M-2, or through M-3 district District, located not less than ~~one hundred fifty (150)~~ feet measured radially from the nearest edge of a residentially zoned or residentially developed lot in the *metropolitan area*; ~~and~~;
8. ~~Located~~located not less than ~~six hundred (600)~~ feet measured radially between the sign and the nearest edge of a residentially zoned or residentially developed lot in the non-metropolitan area;
79. Located not less than ~~seventy-five (75)~~ feet from the nearest edge of the right-of-way of ~~a controlled access highway~~an expressway or designated parkway passing ~~throughon a lot in the metropolitan area~~ and not less than ~~six hundred sixty (660)~~ feet from the nearest edge of ~~a controlled access highway~~an expressway or designated parkway passing ~~throughon a lot in the non-metropolitan area~~;
810. Placed so that the highest point of ~~the advertising~~any freestanding sign does not exceed ~~sixteen (16)~~ feet above ground and so that the highest point of any attached sign does not extend above the building's roofline;
911. Located not within or less than ~~two hundred fifty (250)~~ feet measured radially from any public ~~park or any designated parkway~~ or any individual landmark property or *historic district* designated as such by the Louisville ~~Landmark's~~Metro Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission ~~or the Jefferson County Preservation Commission~~ or from any property listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
12. Not including any digital display or automated changing image component; and
13. Not illuminated with an artificial light source, either internal or external.

For a back-to-back freestanding sign, or a structure with two parallel and directly opposite sign faces oriented in opposite directions and a common set of supports, the applicable area of the sign area is of one sign face only. For a back-to-back sign without a common set of support or a V-shaped sign, the applicable area of the sign is the sum of the areas of the two sign faces.

B. ~~Illuminated Outdoor Advertising Signs~~ Static or Digital Display Off-Premises Sign (Less than 330 square feet) - ~~An illuminated or non-illuminated outdoor advertising sign of in which the area of the sign is less than three hundred thirty (330) square feet, if not otherwise permitted subsection in A., shall be allowed if:~~

1. ~~a) a static off-premises sign and located in a C-1 District; b) a static or digital display off-premises sign and located~~ Located in a C-1, C-2, C-M, EZ-1, PRO, PEC, M-1, M-2 or M-3 District; or b) a digital display off-premises sign and located in a C-3 District;
2. Set back at least ~~thirty (30)~~ feet from the front and/or street side property lines if located in a C-1, C-2 or C-M District;
3. Located along a ~~major or minor arterial highway as~~ street designated on ~~Comprehensive Plan Core Graphic 11, Roadway Classification, or as a minor or major arterial~~ by the Director of Works;
4. Located not less than ~~six hundred (600)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~ off-premises sign of any size on the same side of the same major or minor arterial ~~highway~~ street and not less than ~~twelve hundred (1,200)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~ off-premises sign of any size on the same side of a ~~controlled access highway~~ expressway or designated parkway;
5. Located not less than ~~three hundred (300)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~ off-premises sign of any size on the opposite side of the same major or minor arterial ~~highway~~ street (measured from the point of intersection on the same side of the major or minor arterial ~~highway~~ street with the line from the existing sign perpendicular to the roadway), and not less than ~~six hundred (600)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~ off-premises sign of any size on the opposite side of the same ~~controlled access highway~~ expressway or designated parkway (as so measured);
6. Located not less than ~~seventy-five (75)~~ feet from the centerline of an intersecting roadway;
7. Located not less than ~~three hundred (300)~~ feet (measured radially) between the sign and the nearest edge of a residentially zoned or residentially developed lot in the *metropolitan area* and not less than ~~six hundred (600)~~ feet measured radially between the sign and the nearest edge of a residentially zoned or residentially developed lot in the non-metropolitan area;
8. Located not less than ~~one hundred fifty (150)~~ feet from the nearest edge of the right-of-way of a ~~controlled access highway~~ expressway or designated parkway passing through on a lot in the metropolitan area and not less than ~~six hundred sixty (660)~~ feet from the nearest edge of the right-of-way of a ~~controlled access highway~~ expressway or designated parkway passing through on a lot in the non-metropolitan area;

9. Constructed so the highest point of the sign (including embellishments shall not exceed ~~forty (40)~~ feet above the ground, ~~except that for signs located in the C-1 District the highest point of the sign (including embellishments) shall not exceed thirty-five (35) feet above the ground;~~
10. Located not within or less than five hundred (500)~~250~~ feet measured radially from any public ~~park or any designated parkway~~ or any individual landmark property or *historic district* designated as such by the ~~Landmark's~~ Metro Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission or the ~~Jefferson County Preservation Commission~~ or from any property listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
11. Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph ~~I. hereof~~ 9. or E.1., the highest point of an ~~outdoor advertising~~ sign (including embellishments) located along an elevated section of a ~~controlled access highway~~ expressway may be ~~fifty (50)~~ feet above the ground, provided that the lowest point of the sign shall be not less than ~~ten (10)~~ feet above the grade of the elevated ~~controlled access highway;~~ expressway; and;
12. Illumination for a static sign only illuminates the sign face and does not cause glare.

For a back-to-back freestanding sign, or a structure with two parallel and directly opposite sign faces oriented in opposite directions and a common set of supports, the applicable area of the sign area is of one sign face only. For a back-to-back sign without a common set of support or a V-shaped sign, the applicable area of the sign is the sum of the areas of the two sign faces.

- C. ~~Illuminated/Non-Illuminated Outdoor Advertising~~ Static or Digital Display Off-Premises Sign (330-750 Square Feet) - ~~An illuminated or non-illuminated outdoor advertising sign of in which the area of the sign is greater than or equal to three hundred thirty (330) square feet but less than seven hundred fifty (750) square feet shall be allowed if:~~
 1. a) A static or digital display off-premises sign and located ~~Located~~ in a C-2, C-M, EZ-1, PRO, PEC, M-1, M-2 or M-3 Districts; or b) a digital display off-premises sign and located in a C-3 District;
 2. Set back at least ~~sixty (60)~~ feet from the front or street side property lines if in a C-2 or C-M District;
 3. Located along a ~~major or minor arterial highway~~ as street designated on ~~Comprehensive Plan Core Graphic 11, Roadway Classification,~~ or as a minor or major arterial by the Director of Works;

4. Located not less than ~~twelve hundred (1,200)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the same side of the same major or minor arterial ~~highway~~street and not less than ~~fifteen hundred (1,500)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the same side of a ~~controlled access highway~~expressway or designated parkway;
5. Located not less than ~~six hundred (600)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the opposite side of the same major or minor arterial ~~highway~~street (measured from the point of intersection on the same side of the major or minor arterial ~~highway~~street with the line from the existing sign perpendicular to the roadway), and not less than ~~nine hundred (900)~~ feet from any existing ~~billboard~~off-premises sign of any size on the opposite side of the same ~~controlled access highway~~expressway or designated parkway (as so measured);
6. Located not less than ~~seventy-five (75)~~ feet from the centerline of an intersecting roadway;
7. Located not less than ~~four hundred (400)~~ feet (measured radially) between the sign and the nearest edge of a residentially zoned or residentially developed lot in the *metropolitan area* and not less than ~~six hundred (600)~~ feet measured radially between the sign and the nearest edge of a residentially zoned or residentially developed lot in the non-metropolitan area;
8. Located not less than ~~one hundred fifty (150)~~ feet from the nearest edge of the right-of-way of a ~~controlled access highway~~expressway or designated parkway passing through the *metropolitan area* and not less than ~~six hundred sixty (660)~~ feet from the nearest edge of the right-of-way of a ~~controlled access highway~~expressway or designated parkway passing through on a lot in the non-metropolitan area;
9. Constructed so the highest point of the sign (including embellishments) does not exceed ~~forty (40)~~ feet above the ground: at the base of the sign;
10. Located not within or less than ~~five hundred (500)~~ 250 feet measured radially from any public ~~park or any designated parkway~~ or any individual landmark property or *historic district* designated as such by the Landmark's Metro Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission ~~or the Jefferson County Preservation Commission~~ or from any property listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
11. Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph ~~I. hereof 9. and 9. or E.1.,~~ the highest point of an ~~outdoor advertising~~ sign (including embellishments) located along an elevated section of a ~~controlled access highway~~expressway may be ~~fifty (50)~~ feet above the ground, provided that the lowest point of the sign shall be

not less than ~~ten (10)~~ feet above the grade of the elevated ~~controlled access highway; expressway; and:~~

12. Any illumination for a static sign only illuminates the sign face and does not cause glare.

For a back-to-back freestanding sign, or a structure with two parallel and directly opposite sign faces oriented in opposite directions and a common set of supports, the applicable area of the sign area is of one sign face only. For a back-to-back sign without a common set of support or a V-shaped sign, the applicable area of the sign is the sum of the areas of the two sign faces.

- D. ~~Outdoor Advertising~~Off-Premises Signs (Greater Than 750 Square Feet): No ~~outdoor advertising sign~~ greater than seven hundred fifty (750) square feet shall be allowed in any district.

E. Extensions and Embellishments for ~~Outdoor Advertising~~Off-Premises Signs

1. ~~Allowable Shapes for Outdoor Advertising Signs~~

~~Outdoor advertising signs~~Signs of all sizes shall be rectangular in shape except that extensions are allowed if such extensions are not greater than five (5) feet at the top, two (2) feet at the sides and/or eighteen (18) inches at the bottom of the sign and comprise in the aggregate an area not more than 12.5 percent as great as the basic rectangular shape to which such extensions are attached. Such embellishments are included in the calculation of the sign area restrictions.

2. ~~Extension of Outdoor Advertising Signs~~No attached ~~outdoor advertising sign~~ shall extend past the exterior wall of the building to which it is affixed. The highest point of any attached sign shall not extend above the roofline of the building in which it is attached.

3. ~~Double-Faced/V-Type/Back to Back Outdoor Advertising Signs~~Double-faced, V-type or back-to-back ~~outdoor advertising signs~~ shall be considered as one sign for spacing purposes.

F. Form District ~~Specific Outdoor Advertising Sign~~ Restrictions

New ~~outdoor advertising~~off-premises signs shall not be permitted within the Conservation, Neighborhood, Traditional Neighborhood, Traditional Marketplace Corridor, Traditional Workplace, Town Center, Urban Center Neighborhood, and Downtown Form Districts with the following exceptions:

1. A digital display off-premises sign may be located in a Downtown; Urban Center Neighborhood; Traditional Marketplace Corridor; Town Center; or Traditional Workplace form district provided it meets all other standards.

G. Digital Display Off-Premises Sign Requirements

A digital display off-premises sign shall only be permitted if it meets the following requirements:

1. The sign shall be equipped with an ambient light monitor that automatically adjust the brightness level of the display based on ambient light conditions.
2. Digital animation, streaming video, or images that move or give the appearance of movement are prohibited.
3. A sign utilizing a copy change procedure shall display each individual message a minimum of eight (8) seconds.
4. The images and messages displayed must be static, and the transition from one static display to another must be instantaneous without any transition effects. Transition effects include wipes, fades, or other special effects.
5. The sign shall not have audio speakers or any audio component.
6. Each sign shall be operated with monitoring and methods in place that shall either turn off the display, or show a full black image on the display, in the event of a malfunction that affects more than 50 percent of the sign face.
7. No sign shall exceed a brightness level of 0.3 foot-candles above ambient light as measured using a foot-candle meter at a pre-set distance in accordance with the following procedure:
 - a. At least 30 minutes past sunset, record the ambient light while the sign is off or displaying all black copy, or with the sign's illumination blocked.
 - b. The light meter shall be held five (5) feet above the finished grade in front of the sign.
 - c. The meter shall be aimed toward the center of the sign face.
 - d. From the same location, a second reading shall be recorded while the display is on and not blocked.
8. A revolving or rotating sign is prohibited, except that elements forming a sign face may rotate as part of a copy change procedure.
9. In the C-3 district, no person shall erect a digital off-premises sign without first removing an off-premises sign or signs equal in face area. Any digital off-premises sign erected in the C-3 district shall comply with the removal requirements provided in section H.

H. Off-Premises Sign Removal Exchange Credit

In the C-3 district, no person shall construct a digital display off-premises sign without first removing an off-premises sign or signs equal in face area.

1. The Office of Planning shall maintain an account of exchange credits of existing *off-premises signs* in the C-3 district and shall credit the account of the owner of an *off-premises sign* for each *off-premises sign* that is removed.
2. In order to document the removal of an *off-premises sign*, the owner shall submit to the Office of Planning a copy of any permit for the removal of an *off-premises sign* and photographs documenting the removal.
3. In order to qualify for an exchange credit, the *off-premises sign* to be removed must have been lawfully erected and not abandoned in a manner that jeopardized its legal nonconforming status.
4. Prior to approving any exchange credit, the Office of Planning shall confirm that the *off-premises sign* that was removed or is being removed was or will be lawfully nonconforming at the time of its removal.
5. An exchange credit may be reserved and used by the original owner of the exchange credit within 5 years after the removal. An exchange credit may be transferred to another owner only with approval of the Planning Director.

I. Off-Premises Signs erected by Louisville Metro Government

Signs erected by Louisville Metro Government may be approved on any property, notwithstanding the restrictions in this section, pursuant to the Community Facility review process in Chapter 4, Part 10 of this Land Development Code.

~~NOTE: The prohibition of new billboards in certain form districts (Section 8.4.6 A) is not subject to the LDC waiver process. The provisions provided in this section must be met in full and requirements are not eligible for relief with a variance, waiver, or sign authorization.~~

~~NOTE: Terms in this section that are italicized are defined in Section 1.2.2 of this Land Development Code.~~

SECTION VI: Chapter 8 of the LDC, Section 8.1.6 – General Requirements, is

hereby amended as follows:

8.1.6 General Requirements

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C. ~~Off-premises/Outdoor Advertising~~ signs are prohibited except as specifically allowed under Chapter 4, Part 3.

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SECTION VII: Chapter 8 of the LDC, Section 8.3.3 – Permanent On-premises

Signs for Non-residential Uses, is hereby amended as follows:

8.3.3 Permanent On-Premises Signs for Non-Residential Uses

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B. Freestanding On-Premises Signs: In addition to the attached signs allowed above, illuminated or non-illuminated freestanding business signs are allowed subject to the following restrictions:

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5 An off-premises/~~outdoor~~-advertising sign shall not be counted in determining compliance under Chapter 4, Part 3.

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D. Shared On-Premises Signs shall not be considered off-premises/~~outdoor~~-advertising signs by this regulation.

SECTION VIII: This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and approval, or otherwise becoming law.

Sonya Harward
Metro Council Clerk

Brent Ackerson
President of the Council

Craig Greenberg
Mayor

Approval Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

Michael J. O'Connell
Jefferson County Attorney

By: _____