

GUIDELINES FOR SIGNAGE



Signs are a vital component for many businesses because they serve as the primary identification tool for an establishment and often advertise goods or services that businesses may provide. Signs also play an important role in the overall visual character of an historic area, and therefore, sign guidelines are used to encourage attractive streetscapes and to ensure that new signs do not detract from the area's historic character.

For the purpose of this plan, the following guidelines will apply primarily to Subarea A: Washington Street Corridor and Subarea C: Pennsy Trail Corridor. It should be noted that new signs are subject to the Marion County Sign Ordinance regulations. Copies of the Marion County Sign Ordinance regulations are available in the office of Current Planning, 1821 City County Building, 200 E. Washington Street. In locally protected historic areas, such as Irvington, a Certificate of Appropriateness and a sign permit must be received prior to the installation of any sign.

RECOMMENDED:

General Sign Recommendations

1. Signs should comply with all applicable ordinances and regulations in Marion County, Indiana.
2. The location of signs on commercial buildings should conform with the traditional placement of signs on such buildings. On historic buildings, the appropriate place is often on the lintel strips above the storefront or possibly the transom panels above display windows. For newer buildings, continuous areas immediately above the top of the storefront offer possibilities. These areas should determine the size of the signage and lettering.
3. The size, scale, colors, shapes, and graphics on the sign should be compatible with the building and the surrounding area.
4. A majority of the sign face should contain the business name and image.
5. Lettering styles should be legible, message should be simple, and fabrication should be done with quality materials and craftsmanship.
6. Lighting should be subtle and be compatible with the historic character of the district. It should not unduly detract from nor disturb the historic character of the neighborhood.

Specific Sign Recommendations

- **Window signs:** Signs that are affixed to or located on the interior side of a window, in such a manner that the purpose is to convey the message to the outside. These signs should either be handpainted or silk-screened to the glass. Pre-cut lettering may also be used. Size and scale of the sign should relate to the window opening size. Allow at least eighty percent (80%) visibility through the window.
- **Awning and Canopy Signs:** Such signs should be affixed flat or flush to the surface and scaled so as to not dominate the awning or canopy. Generally, the lettering should be restricted to the face of the projection.
- **Home Occupation Signs:** Any home occupation signs shall be either a window or

wall sign and shall comply with the Sign Regulations of Marion County, Indiana. Furthermore, no display of goods or external evidence of the home occupation shall be permitted.

- **Temporary or Incidental Signs:** Any temporary or incidental sign that is allowed by the Sign Regulations of Marion County, Indiana should adhere to the following guidelines:
 - a. architectural features on the building should not be obscured, and
 - b. attachment to historic material should be done in such a way that any change is reversible.
- **Historic Signs:** Historic signs include historic painted “ghost” signs, historic signs integrated into the façade of a building, and historic projecting signs. Historic signs inventoried in this plan should be retained and restored. Restoration and maintenance of these signs is appropriate, even if they no longer identify or advertise an existing business or meet current standards and regulations.
- **Non-historic Signs:** Such signs should be removed when they no longer relate to the activities being conducted or when a business use ceases.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

1. Internally lighted signs and awnings.
2. Freestanding ground-mounted or pole signs, especially in residential areas. EXCEPTION: A free standing ground-mounted or pole sign may be considered appropriate when used to identify an historic resource that is open to the public. Such signs should be pedestrian-oriented and simple in design.
3. Billboards or other off-premises advertising signs are strongly discouraged. Billboards create a visual conflict with the environment due to their size, location, and general design.
4. Signs identifying a home occupation, historic information, or neighborhood association membership should not:
 - a. be individually lighted
 - b. be freestanding
 - c. constitute advertising
5. Signs that conceal architectural details.
6. Signs that have a negative impact on residential buildings.
7. Listing of products and services that exceeds 10% of sign face and detracts from primary business identification.
8. Box signs that are constructed as independent box-like structures.

9. Flashing, animated or talking signs are generally not recommended. EXCEPTION: Signs that incorporate flashing lights may be considered appropriate for theatres and cinemas only.
10. Roof signs.
11. A projecting sign, unless it is pedestrian oriented and its location, size, style, method of attachment, material and lighting is compatible with the building to which it is attached as well as its surrounding context.

