

February 20, 2024

Mayor Tim Busse, and
City Council Members

Re: Bloomington Sign Code Update

Mayor Busse and Councilmembers,

This letter is written to address our comments on the Sign Code amendments. I have spent the past 35 years either working or managing commercial properties in Bloomington. Kraus-Anderson has a dozen commercial properties in Bloomington, mainly retail and office. I have been actively involved in the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce over the past three decades and a long-time member of the Minnesota Shopping Center Association and International Council of Shopping Centers, where I have earned both the Certified Shopping Center Manager and Certified Retail Property Executive designations. I am also a long-time member of Building Owners and Managers Association. It is from this perspective that I have been asked to review the draft sign ordinance based on my long history of involvement in the industry.

As a starting point, I want the City Council to understand that in many cases the Sign Code amendments result a reduction in the allowed sign area for retail buildings. While the calculations are simplified, the application of the new Sign Code will reduce the allowed sign area for many retail buildings. To illustrate this point, I have included a table that shows the impact on various sized buildings in the Class III and V Sign Districts (Exhibit 1).

Discussion

1. Temporary Signage – We believe the 120-day limit for a multi-tenant property similar to a Southtown or a Valley West is too restrictive. Each year, we have multiple tenants turning over creating the need to announce new store openings. In addition, many retailers have distinct seasonal sales, like Party City around Halloween, where the additional signage is imperative to their success. **We request that you increase the maximum number of days per year. For example, Southtown or Valley West with twenty or more tenants, should have up to 240 days.**
2. Building Signage – As noted in the attachment, building signage is generally decreasing under the proposed amendments. **We request the City increase the 250 square feet limit for signs in the Class III Sign District, and the 150 square feet maximum for signs in the Class V Sign District, to 400 square feet in each case.** I have provided illustrative examples. A retailer with a short name, like “KOHL’S” fits within a 193 square foot sign(Exhibit 2). On the other hand, a retailer with a longer name, like “BED BATH &

BEYOND” had a 400 square foot sign (Exhibit 3). Finally, the sign for Cub Foods at Valley West Shopping Center is 326 square feet (Exhibit 4). Only the Kohl’s sign would be allowed under the new Sign Code. Again, since signage is so critical to the success of retailers, we request 400 square feet as the maximum area in the Class III and Class V districts.

3. Class V Sign District – We believe that use of the of “1.0 square feet per linear foot” for calculation of sign area in the Class V Sign District is too restrictive and results in discrepancies for tenants who have retail units in different districts. For example, if the same tenant, say a Jimmy John’s, has a 20-foot frontage, in the Class III Sign District the tenant would be allowed 25 square feet of signage. In the Class V Sign District, the same size store would only be allowed a 20 square foot sign. **We request that the calculation be based on 1.25 square feet per linear feet in the Class V Sign District, as it is in the Class III Sign District.** Also, Class V properties are more likely to have a second story of retail/office above them, such as The Point at France Ave and Old Shakopee Road (Exhibit 5). In that case, Jimmy John’s is located on the first-floor space and Metro Dental is located on the second floor. Under the Sign Code amendments, the tenants would share linear footage of the building, decreasing allowable signage by half. **We request that each tenant, both first and second floor, be allowed signage based on the 1.25 square feet per linear foot calculation allowed in the Class III Sign District.**
4. Monument Signs – Under the Sign Code amendments, Monument and Pylon signs are limited to 100 square feet in both the Class III and Class V districts. Under the current code, monument signs can vary from 125 to 150 square feet, depending on type and class. **We request that the maximum sign area be increased to 150 square feet for Monument and Pylon signs in the Class III and Class V Districts.** While this may not seem much of a difference, it is significant when you understand that these signs are typically divided into separate panels for each tenant.
5. Electronic Signs - Kraus-Anderson Realty does not have electronic signs in Bloomington. However, we have installed electronic signs in Blaine, Minnesota, another vibrant retail community. In comparing electronic sign criteria, the Bloomington requirements are more restrictive. Bloomington allows a maximum 150 square foot sign, with a dwell time of eight seconds for changeable copy signs and 10-minute static display time for graphic display signs. Blaine allows a maximum 180 square foot sign, with a dwell time of four seconds for changeable copy signs and no limit static display time for graphic display signs. **We request electronic sign requirements similar with the Blaine code.**

Finally, in the staff report, planning notes that additional amendments to the City Code may be needed to allow flexibility under the Planned Development regulations. We request that the City Council direct staff to bring these amendments forward.

During this discussion, staff has noted that it has been almost 30 years since the last major rewrite of the City’s sign regulations. In practice, the Sign Code has been complicated and difficult to implement. As a retail landlord, we applaud the goal of creating simplicity and equity in land use

regulations. However, at a time when retail and commercial buildings are dealing with unprecedented vacancies, we believe more flexibility is required, not less.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. Bill Griffith and I plan to attend the public hearing on February 26, 2024 to present our comments to the City Council. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 612-810-2308 if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,



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Together, strengthening the communities we serve

Exhibit 1

Bloomington Sign Area Projections - Class 3 (1.25 sf per linear foot)

CURRENT CODE SIGNAGE CALCULATION

1st 4,000 SF OF ELEVATION (10% = 400 SF)
 5% for area over 4,000 to 20,000 SF
 2% for area over 20,000 SF

FOR A 16' BUILDING

Current Rule		
Store Front	Wall Area	Sign Area
100	1,600	160.0
200	3,200	320.0
300	4,800	440.0
400	6,400	520.0
500	8,000	600.0
600	9,600	680.0
700	11,200	760.0
800	12,800	840.0
900	14,400	920.0
1000	16,000	1,000.0
1100	17,600	1,080.0
1200	19,200	1,160.0

New Proposal	
Store Front	Sign Area
100	125.0
200	250.0
300	375.0
400	500.0
500	625.0
600	750.0
700	875.0
800	1,000.0
900	1,125.0
1000	1,250.0
1100	1,375.0
1200	1,500.0

Net Gain/Loss	Net Gain/Loss
Sign Area	Percentage
-35	-22%
-70	-22%
-65	-15%
-20	-4%
25	4%
70	10%
115	15%
160	19%
205	22%
250	25%
295	27%
340	29%

FOR A 25' BUILDING

Current Rule		
Store Front	Wall Area	Sign Area
100	2,500	250.0
160	4,000	400.0
200	5,000	450.0
300	7,500	575.0
400	10,000	700.0
500	12,500	825.0
600	15,000	950.0
700	17,500	1,075.0
800	20,000	1,200.0
900	22,500	1,250.0
1000	25,000	1,300.0
1100	27,500	1,350.0
1200	30,000	1,400.0
1300	32,500	1,450.0
1400	35,000	1,500.0

New Proposal	
Store Front	Sign Area
100	125.0
160	200.0
200	250.0
300	375.0
400	500.0
500	625.0
600	750.0
700	875.0
800	1,000.0
900	1,125.0
1000	1,250.0
1100	1,375.0
1200	1,500.0
1300	1,625.0
1400	1,750.0

Net Gain/Loss	Net Gain/Loss
Sign Area	Percentage
125	-50%
-200	-50%
-200	-44%
-200	-35%
-200	-29%
-200	-24%
-200	-21%
-200	-19%
-200	-17%
-125	-10%
-50	-4%
25	2%
100	7%
175	12%
250	17%

Exhibit 1

Bloomington Sign Area Projections - Class 5 (1.0 sf per linear foot)

CURRENT CODE SIGNAGE CALCULATION

1st 4,000 SF OF ELEVATION (10% = 400 SF)
 5% for area over 4,000 to 20,000 SF
 2% for area over 20,000 SF

FOR A 16' BUILDING

Current Rule		
Store Front	Wall Area	Sign Area
100	1,600	160.0
200	3,200	320.0
300	4,800	440.0
400	6,400	520.0
500	8,000	600.0
600	9,600	680.0
700	11,200	760.0
800	12,800	840.0
900	14,400	920.0
1000	16,000	1,000.0
1100	17,600	1,080.0
1200	19,200	1,160.0

New Proposal	
Store Front	Sign Area
100	100.0
200	200.0
300	300.0
400	400.0
500	500.0
600	600.0
700	700.0
800	800.0
900	900.0
1000	1,000.0
1100	1,100.0
1200	1,200.0

Net Gain/Loss	Net Gain/Loss
Sign Area	Percentage
-60	-38%
-120	-38%
-140	-32%
-120	-23%
100	-17%
-80	-12%
-60	-8%
-40	-5%
-20	-2%
0	0%
20	2%
40	3%

FOR A 25' BUILDING

Current Rule		
Store Front	Wall Area	Sign Area
100	2,500	250.0
200	5,000	450.0
300	7,500	575.0
400	10,000	700.0
500	12,500	825.0
600	15,000	950.0
700	17,500	1,075.0
800	20,000	1,200.0
900	22,500	1,250.0
1000	25,000	1,300.0
1100	27,500	1,350.0
1200	30,000	1,400.0
1300	32,500	1,450.0
1400	35,000	1,500.0
1500	37,500	1,550.0
1600	40,000	1,600.0
1700	42,500	1,650.0
1800	45,000	1,700.0

New Proposal	
Store Front	Sign Area
100	100.0
200	200.0
300	300.0
400	400.0
500	500.0
600	600.0
700	700.0
800	800.0
900	900.0
1000	1,000.0
1100	1,100.0
1200	1,200.0
1300	1,300.0
1400	1,400.0
1500	1,500.0
1600	1,600.0
1700	1,700.0
1800	1,800.0

Net Gain/Loss	Net Gain/Loss
Sign Area	Percentage
150	-60%
-250	-56%
-275	-48%
-300	-43%
-325	-39%
-350	-37%
-375	-35%
-400	-33%
-350	-28%
-300	-23%
-250	-19%
-200	-14%
-150	-10%
-100	-7%
-50	-3%
0	0%
50	3%
100	6%

Exhibit 2
SOUTHTOWN KOHL'S - 193 sf



Exhibit 3

SOUTHTOWN BED BATH & BEYOND - 400 sf



Exhibit 4

CUB FOODS - 326 sf



Exhibit 5

THE POINT – France Ave and Old Shakopee Road Zoned B-4 - Class 5 Sign District (1.0 sf per linear foot)

