

CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

ORDINANCE NO. 5877

AN ORDINANCE of the City of Bellevue amending the sign code to incorporate new Bel-Red Land Use Districts, correct references for consistency, and update definitions to reflect departmental changes; amending sections 22B.10.020, 22B.10.025, 22B.10.030, 22B.10.040, 22B.10.055, and 22B.10.140 of the Bellevue City Code; and establishing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the Sign Code establishes standards for the design, placement, size and maintenance of all exterior signs and sign structures in the City; and

WHEREAS, as required under the state Growth Management Act (chapter 36.70A RCW), the City Council adopted the 2008 comprehensive plan amendments on February 17, 2009, which replaced the existing Bel-Red/Northrup Subarea Plan with a new Bel-Red Subarea Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council will adopt, concurrent with this amendment, an ordinance for the Bel-Red Subarea to create zoning and development regulations for the Bel-Red Subarea that would enable the subarea to redevelop consistent with the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, the Growth Management Act, and the land use goals of the City; and

WHEREAS, the development regulations adopted in this ordinance are deemed necessary by the City to foster development and are further deemed to be in the best interests of the public health, safety, and general welfare of the City and its residents; now, therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 22B.10.020 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended as follows:

22B.10.020 DEFINITIONS.

Building Line - Boulevards for Urban Design Treatment. The building line for signs for any property outside the limits of the downtown and abutting a street designated by the urban design element of the comprehensive plan as a boulevard to be given urban design treatment shall be 65 feet from the centerline of the right-of-way. However, the

director may administratively approve a modification of the required building line if the result of such modification would be consistent with the policies of the urban design element of the comprehensive plan.

Building Line - Downtown. The building line for signs for any property within the limits of the downtown and abutting a street classified by LUC 20.25A.115, Design Guidelines - Building/Sidewalk Relationships, shall be 25 feet from the property line. However, the director may administratively approve a modification of the required building line if the result of such modification would be consistent with the Urban Design policies of the comprehensive plan and the requirements of Chapter 20.25.A LUC.

“Major Institution” means a use such as a hospital, convention center, performing arts center, college, or sports arena, or a major office building or mixed use complex containing 300,000 gross square feet or more, located in the downtown or in Bel-Red.

“Office building” means an office building in the PO, O, and BR-ORT land use districts as defined by the Bellevue Land Use Code.

Section 2. Section 22B.10.025 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended as follows:

22B.10.025 DESIGN REVIEW

A. Purpose. Design review is a discretionary administrative decision used to ensure that signs comply with the policies set forth below.

B. Applicability.

1. Where Design Review Applies

a. Affected Land Use or Overlay Districts. The provisions of this section are applicable in the following land use or overlay districts:

- i. DNTN (All Downtown districts);
- ii. CB (Community Business);
- iii. NB (Neighborhood Business);
- iv. OLB-OS (Office Limited Business --- Open Space);
- v. Development in Transition Areas as defined in the Land Use Code; and
- vi. Bel-Red Land Use Districts, except BR-GC unless design review is available per LUC 20.25D.030.C.2.

Signs within the land use and overlay districts set forth above shall also comply with all other provisions of this chapter 22B.10 and provisions applicable to signs that are contained in the Land Use Code (BCC Title 20).

b. Affected Permits, Approvals and Sign Types. The provisions of this section also apply to the following permits, approvals and sign types irrespective of the land use district within which they are located:

- i. Signs for any development required to have design review by ordinance (except Factoria);
- ii. Planned Unit Developments;
- iii. Conditional Uses; and
- iv. Freeway Corridor Signs

Signs requiring the permits/approvals or signs of the type set forth above shall also comply with all other provisions of this chapter 22B.10 and provisions applicable to signs that are contained in the Land Use Code (BCC Title 20).

2. When Design Review Applies.

a. Upon adoption of this code, no sign governed by this code shall be erected, altered or relocated in any new building(s) or project(s), or on existing building(s) or project(s) located in a design district or originally approved through PUD or conditional use processes pursuant to the Land Use Code, without design review approval as described in this section.

b. Signs erected, altered or relocated within an existing building(s) or project(s) outside of any design district and originally approved through any permitting process under the Land Use Code other than through a PUD or conditional use process shall not be subject to the design review requirements of this section, but shall comply with all other applicable provisions of this sign code.

c. A property owner or his or her authorized agent may choose at any time to submit an application for design review for an existing building or project where a design review application has not previously been approved.

C. Applicable Procedure. A design review application is reviewed and approved by the development services department through the design review process described in Chapter 20.30F LUC. Requests to amend a previously approved sign master plan, as well as proposals for new signage which are regulated by an existing sign master plan, require approval of a land use exemption (LUX).

D. Design Review Application Submittal Requirements. Applications for design review shall include the following elements:

1. Location;
2. Lighting;
3. Letter size, type & style;
4. Type (i.e. blade, neon, individual letter);

5. Color(s);
6. Material(s);
7. Sign placement (relationship of all signs to one another on building and/or tenant facades); and
8. Overall signage concept for Construction Period, Initial Lease-up Period, and Permanent Signs.

The director may waive specific submittal requirements determined to be unnecessary for review of a specific application.

E. Design Criteria. Applications for design review are evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. General Requirements.
 - a. Signs shall enhance the overall appearance, image and design character of the building and site.
 - b. Signage shall be simple and clear so as not to distract moving traffic.
 - c. Signs shall be architecturally integrated by relating scale, location, sign type, style and materials to the architectural style and size of the building or tenant facade.
 - d. Signage is prohibited at the upper levels of high rise buildings, with exceptions for hotel/motel or hospital when the design is compatible with building architecture, and for enterprises occupying at least 180,000 net sq. ft. of building floor area as permitted by BCC 22B.10.030.E.
 - e. Placement of signage shall not obscure or overlap architectural elements.
 - f. Signs in commercial development with multiple businesses shall be compatible.
 - g. Signs shall provide information and be consistent with the character of the community.
 - h. Signs shall be incorporated into commercial and public centers that make them appear and function cohesively.
 - i. Perimeter areas of major commercial and public centers shall use appropriate signs to blend with surrounding development and to be compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

- j. Any awning which projects less than three feet from the face of a building is classified as a sign. The entire awning face will be calculated as sign area.
- k. Glass buildings shall incorporate a sign band into the building design to avoid difficult and impractical application of signage to spandrel glass.
- l. Application of multiple signs to one building shall be consolidated or arranged so as not to result in a scattered appearance.
- m. Illuminated signs shall be oriented away from adjoining residential development.
- n. Signage shall be in accord with the comprehensive plan.
- o. Individual letter signage is preferred. Other types of signage may be approved if the design of the sign, including the quality and durability of materials used, is determined to achieve an equivalent result.

In addition to the above, signs located within the land use districts below must also comply with the criteria set forth for such district.

- 2. Community Retail Districts (CB, NB).
 - a. Signs shall be of a type face that can be made as individual letters or a letter type shall be chosen to accommodate the individual letter format. Exceptions may be made for registered trademarks or logos that cannot be manufactured as individual elements.
 - b. Auto-oriented signage shall have a maximum letter size of 36 inches.
 - c. When auto-oriented signage is proposed, it shall be accompanied by pedestrian-oriented signage.
 - d. Signage shall be oriented to face the major direction of pedestrian movement in the area of the sign.
- 3. Downtown and Bel-Red Districts (All DNTN and BR).
 - a. The primary signage for any building or business shall comply with the appropriate design guidelines for the Downtown and Bel-Red Districts, now or as hereafter amended pursuant to the procedures set forth therein.

- b. Pedestrian-oriented signage shall use lettering and graphics no larger than 24 inches and shall be located within the first two floor levels of the building. Twenty-four inches may be an average size when upper and lower case lettering is used. Logos and first-letter capitals may be up to 30 inches if consistent with applicable design review criteria.
- c. Illumination shall be coordinated in multi-sign or multi-tenant buildings.
- d. High rise signs (other than hotel/motel or a Hospital). Signs permitted at the upper levels of high rise buildings pursuant to BCC 22B.10.030 shall comply with the following requirements:
 - i. Signs shall not project above the top of the surface to which they are affixed, nor beyond the edge of any surface to which they are affixed;
 - ii. Signs shall use logos and lettering no larger than eight feet in height;
 - iii. Cabinet and box signs are prohibited;
 - iv. Signs shall be mounted to the building with a mounting system that is not visible beyond the edges of the sign elements;
 - v. Signs shall be designed and located to preserve the integrity of the building roof form; and
 - vi. Sign illumination shall be limited to halo lighting with a white light source; provided that signs may be internally illuminated when the surface on which the sign is mounted is made of glass or other highly reflective material that would interfere with the appearance of the sign if halo-lit. Internal illumination is limited to only those letters or sign elements that will appear white when lit. Any illumination shall be designed to ensure no exposed lighting source or raceway. The light source shall be no brighter than the equivalent of 30 milliamp neon tubing behind a diffuser panel. The applicant shall provide a signed certification from the sign manufacturer declaring that the illumination meets the limits of this subsection.

Section 3. Section 22B.10.030 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended as follows:

22B.10.030 BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL, MANUFACTURING AND MEDICAL INSTITUTION DISTRICT SIGNS - ZONES OLB, OLB-OS, CB, DOWNTOWN-O-1, DOWNTOWN-O-2, DOWNTOWN-MU, DOWNTOWN-R, DOWNTOWN-OB, DOWNTOWN-OLB, GC, LI, MI, AND BEL-RED LAND DISTRICTS, EXCEPT BR-ORT.

A. General - The following provisions govern signs in the OLB, OLB-OS, CB, all Downtown, GC, LI, MI, and all Bel-Red Land Use Districts, except BR-ORT, and may be modified through design review as described in BCC 22B.10.025.

1. Sign Scale. Signs shall be scaled to the building to which the sign is related.

2. Sign Allocation – Single Occupancy Buildings. Any single occupancy building in the above districts shall be permitted the number of primary signs described in subsection C of this section. No more than one of the allowed primary signs may be a freestanding sign unless the single occupancy building faces on more than one street. If the single occupancy building faces on more than one street, see subsection D of this section to determine the number of allowed freestanding signs.

3. Sign Allocation – Multiple Occupancy Buildings. Each enterprise with an exterior entrance in a multiple occupancy building in the above districts shall be permitted the number of primary signs described in subsection C of this section. No more than one freestanding sign is permitted per multiple occupancy building facing on only one street. If the multiple occupancy building faces on more than one street, see subsection D of this section to determine the number of allowed freestanding signs.

4. Address Number. Each enterprise shall display and maintain on-premises street address number identification. Such identification shall not be included in the number of primary signs.

5. Multiple Buildings on 15 Acres or More. A multiple building complex encompassing at least 15 acres may display one complex identification sign along each right-of-way which provides direct access to the complex. Each sign shall not exceed 75 square feet in area and 15 feet in height.

B. Dimensional Limitations. Except as otherwise specifically allowed herein, all signs shall conform with the setback, area, and height limitations set forth in this section.

1. Setback Limitations – Freestanding Signs. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the size of any freestanding sign shall not exceed the following limits based on the setback of the sign from the property line:

Setback	Maximum Area
Between property line and building line	25 sq. ft.
On building line or behind it	75 sq. ft.

2. Sign Height – Freestanding Signs. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the height of any freestanding sign shall not exceed the following limits based on the setback of the sign:

Setback	Maximum Height
Between property line and building line	5 ft.
On building line or behind it	15 ft.

3. Sign Area Limitations – Building-Mounted, Upper-Level High-Rise, Roof or Canopy-Mounted Signs. Unless otherwise provided in this section, the surface area of any building-mounted, upper-level high-rise, roof or canopy-mounted signage shall not exceed the figures derived from the following schedule.

Relevant Surface Area or Facade Area as Determined Pursuant to BCC 22B.10.020	Maximum Sign Surface Area for That Facade
Below 100 sq. ft.	26 sq. ft.
100 – 199 sq. ft.	26 sq. ft. + 11% of facade area over 100 sq. ft.
200 – 499 sq. ft.	38 sq. ft. + 12% of facade area over 200 sq. ft.
500 – 999 sq. ft.	75 sq. ft. + 11% of facade area over 500 sq. ft.
1,000 – 1,499 sq. ft.	131 sq. ft. + 7.5% of facade area over 1,000 sq. ft.
1,500 – 2,999 sq. ft.	169 sq. ft. + 2.5% of facade area over 1,500 sq. ft.
Over 3,000 sq. ft.	206 sq. ft. + 1.5% of facade area over 3,000 sq. ft. to a maximum of 300 sq. ft.

a. For other than upper-level high-rise signs and signs for an entertainment/public assembly use, in multiple occupancy buildings the facade area for each enterprise is derived by measuring only the surface area of the exterior facade of the premises actually used by the enterprise, and the sign displayed by the enterprise shall be located on the facade used to determine the size of the sign, except as provided in this section.

b. For upper-level high-rise signs, sign size may be up to 300 square feet, regardless of facade size. For entertainment/public assembly use signs, the director may approve through design review sign area not to exceed a maximum of 400 square feet per sign; provided, that the total sign area of building-mounted signs on entertainment/public assembly uses shall not exceed 35 percent of the surface area of the enterprise's facade on which the signs are located.

c. Unused sign surface area for a facade may be used by any enterprise within the same multiple occupancy building, or by any enterprise within the same multiple building complex located within a downtown land use district and Bel-Red land use districts BR-OR-1, BR-OR-2, BR-RC-1, BR-RC-2, and BR-MO-1, if:

i. The applicant files with the city a written statement signed by the enterprise that earned the sign area under this code permitting the applicant to utilize the unused sign surface area.

